

# The Blue Cliff Record

Translated by Thomas Cleary and J. C. Cleary

Foreword by Taizan Maezumi Roshi



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# Foreword

*Boundless wind and moon—the eye within eyes,  
Inexhaustible heaven and earth—the light beyond light,  
The willow dark, the flower bright—ten thousand  
houses;  
Knock at any door—there's one who will respond.*

This verse is known as the Preface to *The Blue Cliff Record*. Although the name of the book is taken from the place where it was written, all heaven and earth is nothing but the mass of this Blue Cliff. The hundred cases selected by Hsueh Tou for *The Blue Cliff Record* are as ten thousand and eighty-four thousand, which are the numbers of dharmas expounded by Shakyamuni Buddha. The innumerable dharmas revealed by him are to be found in each case of *The Blue Cliff Record*.

There are numerous ways to read a book: skimming, memorizing, careful study, quiet reading, reading aloud, reading with the body, reading with the mind, and reality-reading. It is this last kind of reading which *The Blue Cliff Record* requires. In this mode, you yourself become the case, and in so doing, the Blue Cliff of ancient China stands revealed as your very life, right here in this time and place.

Since the translators have already ably discussed the form and compilation of the book in their introduction, it is unnecessary for me to cover the same ground. But I should like to mention one thing: that the first person to introduce this text to Japan was Kigen Dōgen Zenji, founder of the Soto School of Japanese Zen. In 1227, at age 26, Dōgen Zenji had completed five years of study in China and was preparing for his return to Japan. But shortly before leaving, he discovered a copy of *The Blue Cliff Record*, and was so impressed that he spent his entire last night in China sitting up and hand-copying it. The hand-copied manuscript, known as the *Ichiyā Hekigan* or “*One-Night Blue Cliff Record*,” is now treasured and housed at Daijōji Monastery in Japan.

As mentioned in the Introduction, around 1140 Ta Hui

burned the original, published by his teacher Yuan Wu in 1128. The familiar version of the present day is the edition of 1300, based upon remaining handwritten copies and two previously published versions. The manuscript Dōgen Zenji brought back to Japan some seventy years earlier was probably based on one of the two previous versions, or on a handwritten copy of the day.

*The Blue Cliff Record* has become almost uniquely revered among Zen Buddhists as a model koan text, especially noted for its subtlety and profundity in both form and content. Interestingly enough, another koan collection, the *Book of Equanimity* (I.: *Shōyō Roku*) parallels it in form and level of sophistication. Unlike *The Blue Cliff Record*, which was compiled and refined by masters of the Rinzai and Ummon Schools, the *Book of Equanimity* is a product of the Soto lineage, and is primarily associated with that school. Nonetheless, *The Blue Cliff Record* appears to have been widely appreciated by Soto masters, although the *Book of Equanimity* failed to gain much prominence among teachers of the Rinzai School.

It is noteworthy that Dōgen Zenji selected twenty-four cases from *The Blue Cliff Record*, nearly a fourth of the total number of cases, for inclusion in his own three-hundred-case collection of koans entitled the *Shinji Shōbōgenzō* ("The *Shōbōgenzō* in Chinese"). This is not to be confused with the *Kaji Shōbōgenzō* ("The *Shōbōgenzō* in Japanese"), which most modern readers think of when they mention the *Shōbōgenzō*. This latter work is heavily based upon koan interpretations and commentaries by Dōgen Zenji.

We mention this because of an unfortunately widespread impression nowadays that Dōgen Zenji and the Soto School represent a non-koan or even anti-koan orientation within Zen. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Like Ta Hui of the Lin Chi School, Dōgen Zenji was critical of the abuses of koan study common in his day. These abuses, which essentially involved a stereotyped and overly intellectual use of koans, led Dōgen Zenji to express his concern lest the clarity and vigor of Zen students fall into deeper decline. Similarly, Ta Hui's burning of *The Blue Cliff Record* was an expression of his concern over the misuse of koans, rather than any fundamental objection to the use of koans, verses, or commentaries as such.

Avoiding sectarian prejudice, misunderstanding, or biased views of koans, I sincerely wish that *The Blue Cliff Record*, one of the most wonderful dharma-treasures of the world's Eastern heritage, will at last be fully appreciated by, and benefit, its Western readers.

This tremendous work of translating *The Blue Cliff Record* has not previously been done by American scholars and is to be highly appreciated and praised. Western Zen Buddhists have waited a long time for a competent translation of this major text; they need wait no longer.

Moreover, I appreciate the extra effort expended to translate Master Tung Shan's *Five Ranks* and Master Fen Yang's *Eighteen Categories of Questions*. While it is true that Hsueh Tou was the first to append appreciatory verses to *The Blue Cliff Record*, nonetheless it was Fen Yang who first began the practice of composing such verses for koans in general. So readers may find these appended works of some special interest.

Regarding actual practice, I firmly believe that this translation is a milestone and will immensely benefit those who are sincerely engaged in the practice and enlightenment of the Buddha-way. Since Zen students must deal with these cases meticulously and in great detail, it can be seen how indispensable is a translation such as this. These cases are, after all, more than mere anecdotes of historical or philosophical interest. They are the living record of generations of enlightened practice. It is my sincere hope that, in appreciating these cases along with the verses, commentaries, and capping-phrases, the reader will be enriched in his understanding of the practice and accomplishment of *Anuttara Samyak Sambodhi*, the Supreme and Unexcelled Enlightenment.

A famous expression comes to mind:

*"Before attaining enlightenment,  
mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers.*

*At the moment of enlightenment,  
mountains are no longer mountains, nor are rivers rivers.*

*But after accomplishing enlightenment,  
mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers."*

This expression deals with three stages of practice. It is vital

that the reader understand that the "mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers" experience *after* enlightenment is not at all the same as *before* such a realization. We cannot dispense with the "mountains are no longer mountains, nor are rivers rivers" aspect, which requires that the individual clearly realize his own true nature.

Although we know that all animate and inanimate beings are intrinsically buddhas, mere knowing is not enough. Dōgen Zenji says, "This dharma, (enlightened life) is abundantly inherent in each individual; nevertheless, without practice it will not be revealed, and without enlightenment it will not be realized."

*The Blue Cliff Record* reveals to us what enlightenment is, what the enlightened life is, how the patriarchs and masters of old struggled with it, attained it, actualized it, and accomplished it.

Penetrating the Blue Cliff, you will open ". . . the eye within eyes," and realizing life through the Blue Cliff, you yourself will become a torch, ". . . the light beyond light."

Being so, you will find no door at which to knock, nor any door to be opened.

Taizan Maezumi Roshi  
Zen Center of Los Angeles  
September, 1976



# Preface

The introductory essay in this volume is intended to introduce some aspects of the tradition behind the classic Ch'an Buddhist *kung an* collection *Pi Yen Lu* which is presented here in English translation as *The Blue Cliff Record*.

The Chinese and Japanese pronunciations Ch'an and Zen are used in this volume because they are most familiar to Westerners, and it has been the Chinese and Japanese traditions of Ch'an which have thus far indirectly and directly most affected the early growth of Zen in the West. Ch'an also existed and exists in Korea and Vietnam, and contacts between these traditions and Western students have begun; for all of these, however, Chinese Ch'an is the ancestral tradition, and this will be our focus in the introduction to this volume.

Our primary aim is not historical record or doctrine as they are conventionally understood. Some books have touched on the subject, but there is as yet hardly any information in Western languages about Ch'an Buddhist teaching and history, and there are not enough authentic Ch'an texts translated to make a modern historiography practical or clearly show what Ch'an may mean in the present day.

When Buddhism crossed civilization boundaries in the past, translation, study, and practice were carried on for centuries before native schools of Buddhism emerged to present the teachings in new, currently useful forms. Western civilization has pretensions to objective scholarship and knowledge, with advanced techniques of information retrieval, but with all this has been slow to find out anything much about the Buddhist teachings, a part of the human heritage which cannot be claimed or relegated to any particular culture or time. An old description of five kinds of ch'an, or meditation, depicts the lowest as that of those seeking heavenly states; the next is that of the ordinary person who sees cause and effect and practices for the betterment of mental and physical health. Without going on to speak of the rest, it is obvious that these first two are with us now, and we can no longer be content with crude

generalities, sectarian claims, or impressionistic accounts of the nature of Ch'an Buddhism. The aim of this volume is to present an authentic Ch'an text unencumbered by attempted explanations based on preconceptions regarding the text itself or the mental state of the reader.

Though we have sketched an outline of early to medieval Chinese Ch'an, since Ch'an is not a doctrinal school, generalizations about its historical forms are of limited usefulness; in an attempt to amend the shortcomings of a general approach, therefore, this volume includes excerpts from the lives and sayings of the Ch'an masters appearing in the main cases of volume one, based on materials from several collections of sayings, biographies, and "transmission of the lamp" records. Though the introduction is in the beginning, the reader may find it as interesting or useful to begin anywhere in the book.

Ch'an expression is usually very concentrated, and most recorded sayings of Ch'an masters come from people in special communities where the level of effort would be more intense than that of much of ordinary life in society. The reader must see through whatever cultural peculiarities are inevitable in an eight hundred and fifty year old book from another civilization; in doing so the reader must also see through present cultural peculiarities of thought and action, an effort which is itself a task of meditation. This book is not presented as a fossil embedded in the dust of a distant past, for the essence of Ch'an, the essence of mind, is timeless and placeless.

# Introduction

*The Blue Cliff Record* is a translation of the Chinese Ch'an Buddhist classic *Pi Yen Lu*,<sup>1</sup> a collection of one hundred anecdotes of sayings and doings mainly from traditional accounts of Ch'an teachers and disciples, illustrated in verse and prose by outstanding Ch'an masters of later times. This set of one hundred *kung an*, "public cases"<sup>2</sup> of ancient events, was compiled by the eminent Sung dynasty Ch'an master Hsueh Tou Ch'ung Hsien (980–1052); Hsueh Tou pointed out the import of each story with verses and additional remarks of his own, as aid and guidance for observation and contemplation. About sixty years after Hsueh Tou's death, another excellent Ch'an teacher, Yuan Wu K'e Ch'in (1063–1135), gave a series of talks elucidating the original anecdotes and the verses of Hsueh Tou's collection. The anecdotes, Hsueh Tou's verses, and Yuan Wu's introductions, remarks, and commentaries all together form *The Blue Cliff Record*, named after the abode on Mt. Chia in Hunan where Yuan Wu once delivered his talks. This book has long been considered as one of the finest works of Ch'an literature, and defies adequate description short of its own presentation.

The Buddha Gautama, Shakyamuni, whom all Buddhists regard as their ancestor, invented and adapted various teachings and techniques to liberate people; he was likened to a skilled physician giving specific medicines to cure certain diseases. It is said, therefore, that there is no fixed teaching. Yet in spite of outward differences resulting from necessary adaptation to different situations, capacities of understanding and personality configurations, the real Buddha Dharma, the teaching of the enlightened ones, is of one uniform flavor, the flavor of liberation. Just as many streams lead to the ocean, where they merge into the uniform flavor of salt, goes the ancient metaphor, so do the teachings of enlightenment lead to the ocean of enlightenment and merge into the uniform flavor of liberation. When this essence is lost, and people enshrine relics of past method for a sense of personal satisfaction, righteousness, or

comfort, then it is said that the medicine has become a disease. It is the practice of Ch'an and all real Buddhism to cut through all ploys of egoism in all its guises, "holy" or "profane," to break up stultifying material and intellectual idolatry.

A Ch'an master once wrote that the wise enshrine the miraculous bones of the ancients within themselves; that is, they do not regard teachings of ways to enlightenment as an external body of knowledge or information to be possessed as an acquisition or believed or revered as inflexible dogma, but rather apply it as far as possible to themselves and their situations, vivifying the way of enlightenment with their own bodies and lives, not just in their thoughts. It is therefore a matter of course that new Buddhist literature has been produced; for the Buddhist canon is not closed, as long as people continue the search for enlightenment. This is where a consideration of Buddhist history has some meaning: to help us see what ages and what is ageless.

As many Buddhist texts and practitioners entered Chinese civilization during the first millennium A.D., overtly representing different trends of thought and action, Chinese Buddhists developed, through study and practical application and experimentation, systems of organization, analysis, interpretation, meditation, and ritual. Several Buddhist schools arose in China between the fifth and seventh centuries, including the four major schools known as T'ien T'ai, Hua Yen, Pure Land (Ching T'u), and Ch'an. The schools based on specific scriptures and treatises and commentaries by Indian and Chinese masters were referred to in Ch'an jargon as "doctrinal schools" or "teaching schools."

The principal scriptures of the T'ien T'ai school are the *Saddharmapundarika* ("Lotus of Truth") and *Mahaparinirvana* ("Great Decease"); of the Hua Yen, the *Avatamsaka* ("Garland"); of the Pure Land, the *Sukhavativyuha* ("Lay of the Land of Bliss"). Ch'an students generally read these scriptures, as well as others such as the *Vajracchedika* ("Diamond Cutter"), *Surangama* ("Heroic Going"), *Vimalakirtinirdesa* ("Teaching of Vimalakirti"), and *Lankavatara* ("Descent into Sri Lanka"); thus, the study of classical Buddhist scriptures and treatises and the practice of various meditation methods were in the background of Ch'an studies, directly or indirectly, whether or not living masters of the other schools were in existence. Later

followers of the teaching schools often concentrated on the works of the Chinese founders, who analyzed, synthesized, and organized the numerous and extensive Buddhist teachings, presenting them in a crystallized form for current use. Ch'an students did likewise, concentrating on the great Ch'an masters, but kept contact with other forms of Buddhist teaching, ancient and contemporary.

Ch'an was referred to by its followers as the "school of the patriarchs" because it was transmitted by a living succession of human exemplars; not a school of doctrine, or philosophical or scholastic interpretation, it was not based on any particular scripture, but on the direct experience of the enlightened mind, by whatever means currently necessary. There were many professional lecturing monks who specialized in certain texts or groups of texts, but Ch'an teachers originally did not make systematic explanations of Buddhist texts or traditional teachings; many students learned about Buddhism in the lecturing halls before coming to Ch'an study. Ch'an teachers drew freely on the ancient "Teachings," using quintessential passages from the scriptures to illustrate points in the course of their talks to students, much in the same way as they came to use sayings and anecdotes of earlier Ch'an masters. One of the attachments that Ch'an teachers had to deal with when doctrinal Buddhism became too institutionalized and formally traditionalized was the attachment of externalists and intellectuals to names and forms which had come to be hallowed.

During the fifth and sixth centuries meditation studies developed considerably in China, especially in the northern kingdoms. Early meditation adepts were generally ascetics and strict disciplinarians, often living in secluded mountain areas or in monasteries surrounding distinguished teachers or practicing alone. Recitation of scriptures, spells, and devotional formulas was carried to great lengths by some early meditators, and has been used to a greater or lesser extent throughout Ch'an history.

Ch'an tradition recognizes Bodhidharma (4-6 c. A.D.) as its first patriarch in China. He came to China in the late fifth or early sixth century<sup>3</sup> and traveled around for over fifty years, teaching when the occasion arose. Bodhidharma is said to have used the *Lankavatara* scripture in his teaching; this scripture represents teachings of the Yogacara, or "yoga practice" school,

which says that reality as we conceive it is only mental, and uses meditational techniques of yoga to break mental attachments to mental processes which cause our discomfort and confusion. Shakyamuni Buddha used ancient techniques of yoga, but only to break concrete and abstract attachments and realize *moksha*, freedom, not to attain supposedly higher states. We have several documents purported to record teachings of Bodhidharma; the standard slogan of later times was that he pointed directly to the human mind, and undoubtedly used various methods to accomplish this. Bodhidharma is said to have had four adept disciples in China, and by the seventh century was recognized as one of the few meditation teachers of early times who inspired a continuing living succession.

Bodhidharma's principal heir Hui K'e (486-593), the second patriarch, and his successor Seng Ts'an (d. 606), the third patriarch, still living in a time of disunity and strife in what had been the Chinese empire, seem to have wandered around, engaging in local activity but never establishing any fixed abode as teaching centers. Hui K'e spent many years in Yeh, a metropolis in the northeast quarter of China, and is said to have met ten enlightened students over the years. After large numbers of monks and nuns were made to return to lay life, and monastic properties were taken by the governments in northern China around 577, Hui K'e spent the last sixteen years of his life dressed as a layman, even though the bans were later lifted, and the Buddhist communities resumed their growth and prosperity. He was opposed by an established Buddhist teacher, as Bodhidharma had been opposed by both Indian and Chinese lecturers, for unorthodox teachings and methods, and eventually killed. Seng Ts'an, of whom almost nothing is known, was also a layman when he met Hui K'e, who was his teacher for ten years in the mountains of Anwei, evidently near the close of the sixth century. He is said to have written the long poem *Hsin Hsin Ming*<sup>4</sup> which has always been popular and is considered the first classic of Chinese Ch'an.

The fourth patriarch of Ch'an, Tao Hsin (580-651), settled down on a mountain in central China for over thirty years, and a community of five hundred people eventually gathered around him. This community maintained its own livelihood, and Tao Hsin ignored the invitations of the T'ang imperial court, which usually richly patronized Buddhists. Tao Hsin is

said to have spent two years on a journey to south China in later life. He wrote a book about standards of conduct for bodhisattvas, those following the path of knowledge of reality; he also wrote a book on meditation, outlining various methods and their effects, referring to various scriptural sources.<sup>5</sup> Ch'an had not been widespread during the times of the earlier patriarchs, but with Tao Hsin it came to be known all over China.

Tao Hsin was a strict teacher and only approved of one successor out of his many disciples; this was Hung Jen (602-675), the fifth patriarch. Hung Jen was with Tao Hsin from the age of seven until his late thirties, working by day and meditating by night. Among Hung Jen's eleven enlightened successors were Shen Hsiu (602-706) and Hui Neng (638-713): Shen Hsiu, a learned monk as well as a meditation master, was considered the sixth patriarch in the tradition of the so-called northern school of Ch'an; Hui Neng, an illiterate wood-cutter, was considered the sixth patriarch in the tradition of the so-called southern school. Teachers of the northern school worked mostly in or near urban areas of north China, especially the western capital of T'ang, Ch'ang An. These lineages died out by the end of the T'ang dynasty. There is a saying in Ch'an that each generation must go beyond its predecessors for the transmission to continue.

Some documents of the northern school were brought to Japan by the pilgrim Saicho in the early ninth century; Saicho had actually met Ch'an people of the so-called ox head (Niu T'ou) and northern schools, and included several texts documenting the inclusion of Ch'an as the Bodhidharma Sect in the four transmissions or heritages claimed by Tendai Buddhism in Japan, along with the philosophy and cessation of thought and observation of reality practices of T'ien T'ai, esoteric ritual, art, spells, and scriptures of tantric Buddhism, and precepts for bodhisattvas. The Bodhidharma Sect was brought to life for a time by Dainichi Nonin and some dedicated students and successors. Nonin was a Tendai student who specialized in Ch'an meditation and had such profound realization that he began to teach with effect. Many of the students of his successors and their successors eventually joined the Zen master Dogen (1200-1253), who returned from China in 1227 and gradually began to write and teach. Criticized for not having a teacher's

bequest, Nonin sent two disciples to China with a statement of his realization, and was acknowledged by a Lin Chi master, of the southern school; so the reality behind Ch'an is not sectarian.

Hui Neng had become enlightened in his mid-twenties while a poor woodcutter in the frontier lands of south China. He later traveled north to see Hung Jen, and became a workman in Hung Jen's community at Huang Mei. Hung Jen recognized Hui Neng's enlightenment and after a short time passed on to him the robe and bowl of Bodhidharma as symbols of the patriarchate; he did this in secret, it is said, and sent Hui Neng away, fearing the jealous wrath of the monks because Hui Neng was a peasant from the uncivilized far south with no formal training in Buddhism. After fifteen years of wandering, Hui Neng reappeared in south China, became ordained as a Buddhist monk, and began to teach at Pao Lin monastery near the source of Ts'ao Ch'i, the Ts'ao Valley River. He awakened many people, and most of the teachers who appear in *The Blue Cliff Record* were descended from Hui Neng.

Little is known of most of Hui Neng's immediate disciples, but in the succeeding generation there appeared two great masters, Shih T'ou Hsi Ch'ien (700–790) and Ma Tsu Tao Yi (709–788), under whom Ch'an began to flourish in China as never before. From these two masters were descended the so-called "Five Houses and Seven Sects" of Ch'an which arose from the ninth to eleventh centuries. Descended from Ma Tsu were the Kuei-Yang and Lin Chi houses, named after *Kuei Shan* Ling Yu (771–854), *Yang Shan* Hui Chi (813–890), and *Lin Chi* Yi Hsuan (d. 867); during the eleventh century two great masters of Ch'an in the Lin Chi house, *Huang Lung* Hui Nan (1002–1069) and *Yang Ch'i Fang* Hui (d. 1049), were so influential and produced so many enlightened successors that their lineages became known as the *Huang Lung* and *Yang Ch'i* sects, or streams. From Shih T'ou were descended the *Ts'ao-Tung*, *Yun Men*, and *Fa Yen* houses, named after *Tung Shan* Liang Chieh (807–869), *Ts'ao-Shan* Pen Chi (840–901), *Yun Men* Wen Yen (d. 949), and *Fa Yen* Wen Yi (885–958). Referred to as schools, sects, houses, or clans of Ch'an, they were not sects in the sense of membership, but were terms of respect given later to successions of living masters, called after the reference names of their distinguished ancestors.



The five houses era was the most original and creative period of Ch'an teaching, source of much illustrative material and symbolic method used in later times. A considerable body of sayings and writings of the patriarchs and eminent heirs of the five houses and seven sects has been preserved. The living succession of the Kuei-Yang, the earliest house, died out in the tenth century, after five generations; Kuei Shan's *Admonitions*, a short treatise for Ch'an students, was used in Ch'an communities for over a thousand years. Te Kuang, a Lin Chi master in the second generation after Yuan Wu, sent this book over to Dainichi Nonin in Japan, and it was the first Ch'an book to be printed in that country.

The Fa Yen house also lasted about a century, while the Yun Men house, extremely effective for several generations after Hsueh Tou, lasted for some three hundred years and preserved and transmitted a great deal of Ch'an literature. The Lin Chi house, especially the Yang Ch'i branch, eventually became the most powerful and long lived Ch'an succession in China, while the Ts'ao Tung, not as prominent, nevertheless continued to exist and play a part in the Ch'an work for many centuries.

The Kuei-Yang and Lin Chi houses were both descended from Ma Tsu's great heir Pai Chang Huai Hai (720-814), who wrote the "Pure Rules for Ch'an Gardens" and uttered the famous dictum "One day without working is a day without eating." Pai Chang is known for having formally established a unique Ch'an monastic system. By the time of Kuei Shan, the monasteries were so wealthy and populous and so many monks were lazy and decadent that Kuei Shan wrote his little book warning about the deception of abundant offerings and supplies, criticizing the "rice bags" and "clothes hangers" who joined monastic life for food, clothing, and shelter without seriously trying to awaken to reality.

The Yun Men and Fa Yen houses were descended from the powerful master Te Shan Hsuan Chien (d. 867) and his successor Hsueh Feng Yi Ts'un, a great teacher of over sixty enlightened disciples. Te Shan was famous for his use of the staff to strike students; Hsueh Feng once had a major insight when struck by Te Shan. Te Shan's contemporary Lin Chi was equally famous for his shouting, and the "staff of Te Shan and the shout of Lin Chi" is a standard Ch'an expression to be met frequently in *The Blue Cliff Record*.

Kuang Tso, the outstanding Yun Men master of the time, he asked, "When one does not produce a single thought, how can there be any fault?" Chih Men called him closer: as Hsueh Tou approached, Chih Men hit him on the mouth with his whisk; as Hsueh Tou was about to open his mouth, Chih Men hit him again, whereupon Hsueh Tou awoke. Hsueh Tou became a great teacher, and is said to have had eighty-four enlightened successors; through his living heirs and his great literary ability his brilliance shone and reached many people.

Yuan Wu K'e Ch'in was a master in the tenth generation of the Lin Chi succession, descendent of Fen Yang Shan Chao and Yang Ch'i Fang Hui. He studied with teachers of the Yun Men and Ts'ao-Tung as well as both branches of the Lin Chi school before he finally succeeded to Wu Tsu Fa Yen (d. 1104). Yuan Wu, "Perfect Enlightenment," was one of the titles bestowed on him by the Sung emperor Hui Tsung; he served as abbot and teaching master in several major temples by imperial request, and is said to have had seventy-five enlightened disciples. Besides *The Blue Cliff Record*, there are extensive records of Yuan Wu's sayings, as well as a large collection of letters, many to his enlightened disciples. All of the Rinzai Zen schools in modern Japan are descended from Yuan Wu.

Hsueh Tou and Yuan Wu were from the schools of Ch'an which seem to have most emphasized work with *kung an*; as is usual in the doings of Ch'an teachers, there were different ways of using the stories and sayings of the ancients. In general it may be said that contemplation and gradual application as well as complete concentration without thought were used, and we have both discursive and abrupt comments on the cases from various masters. The method of concentration without thinking, used to stop mind wandering without letting it sink into oblivion, generally focused on a word or phrase, called a *hua tou*, and was used a lot by later Lin Chi masters. *The Blue Cliff Record* gives excellent insight into what the stories point to, and advice on how to apply them in life.

*The Blue Cliff Record* gained great popularity in a short time, so much so that Ta Hui, an influential successor of Yuan Wu sometimes called the second coming of Lin Chi, destroyed the printing blocks because he observed that enthusiasm for eloquence and beauty of expression was hindering people from directly experiencing enlightenment on their own. In Ta Hui's

Ch'an is based on the actual experience of enlightenment, and though Ch'an students generally still studied major great vehicle Buddhist scriptures, the sayings and doings of enlightened Ch'an masters came to supplant the Indian Buddhist scriptures as guides, indications and inspiration for their conduct, meditation, and knowledge. The production of such books as *The Blue Cliff Record* was an outgrowth of the "recollections of the Buddhas" which was part of the practice of Ch'an. Although it seems from the sayings of Yuan Wu that many students wasted Ch'an literature by remaining in conceptual or aesthetic views, it seems that the use of "public cases" of the ancients was instrumental in revivifying the inspiration of Ch'an practice, especially as contact between teacher and disciple became more ritualized. In later Ch'an literature there are many stories of people awakening under the impact of a phrase or event, a sight or a sound, after becoming engrossed in a story or saying through contemplation and observation.

The practice of observation of sayings seems to have been applied with great effect by some masters in Sung times, and the literature which grew up around it concentrated the rich legacy of the highly original T'ang and Five Dynasties (906–960) masters and provided "grammars," as it were, of Ch'an idiom, and methods of describing Ch'an history and meditation states. Eventually traditional modes of expression and transformation became widely used as a medium for question and discussion of Ch'an, though there is a virtually endless variety of detail. A good deal of Zen literature of medieval Japan also consists of recorded sayings and poems in terse symbolic style like the Sung masters who founded several streams of Ch'an in Japan; part of the reason for this was the need to communicate in writing between Chinese teachers and Japanese students. Japanese masters inherited this style somewhat, and continued to write in Chinese for over five hundred years, but also produced a parallel literature in Japanese which came to be quite different in style from the Chinese.

Hsueh Tou Ch'ung Hsien, fourth patriarch and reviver of the Yun Men school, visited the lecturing halls after his ordination and was unmatched in the study of the Buddhist scriptures and treatises; he was considered a "vessel of the Dharma" by his teachers and urged to study Ch'an. When he met Chih Men

Kuang Tso, the outstanding Yun Men master of the time, he asked, "When one does not produce a single thought, how can there be any fault?" Chih Men called him closer: as Hsueh Tou approached, Chih Men hit him on the mouth with his whisk; as Hsueh Tou was about to open his mouth, Chih Men hit him again, whereupon Hsueh Tou awoke. Hsueh Tou became a great teacher, and is said to have had eighty-four enlightened successors; through his living heirs and his great literary ability his brilliance shone and reached many people.

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time there were still numerous enlightened teachers, and a long tradition; Ta Hui wrote and spoke a great deal, especially denouncing repetitious imitation Ch'an without enlightenment. One of his techniques was to reject all answers to *kung an*; his dynamic methods were very effective in his time, and he produced over ninety enlightened disciples, but his lineage died out after a few generations.

We in the West are lacking even in information about Ch'an, and many of the accounts we have been given in the last fifty years or so are quite confused and confusing, engendering misconceptions about Ch'an, if not about reality. These *The Blue Cliff Record* seriously challenges and can help us to see through if we do not insist upon our customary habits of thought. There are at least four books on the same model as *The Blue Cliff Record* made by Ts'ao-Tung masters after Yuan Wu's time, and innumerable other books related to Buddhism from all ages: instructions on conduct and meditation, recorded sayings, collections of incidents, remarks, conversations, poetry, general and specific treatises in prose and poetry on various aspects of Ch'an history, symbolism, contemporary situations, psychology, practice and realization. Certain communities in the present may find particular books useful and ignore others, but for the common human heritage over a longer period of time, individual communities or scholars cannot canonize only certain aspects of Buddhism. The publication of *The Blue Cliff Record* in English will help to open new vistas in the study of Buddhism in the West, but is only part of a larger task. Though even one story in this volume can reveal infinite implications to those of profound insight, for a larger audience the dimensions of the impact of *The Blue Cliff Record* will expand through long contemplation facilitated by the mirrors of other Ch'an and Buddhist texts as they become available.

Ultimately, the appreciation and usefulness of this book is in the hands of the reader. Its literary expressiveness is so rich that it can hardly fail to make an impression, even though the book was not translated as a literary work. Even the manifest content of this work provides a certain sustenance: the universality of the message beckons us on, and its immediate challenge can inspire us to profounder levels of insight. Even Ha-kuin, considered the greatest Zen master in Japan in the last

five hundred years, said that he still had new insights on certain sayings after having lectured on *The Blue Cliff Record* for thirty years. Ch'an masters tell us to look right where we stand and step: they ask what is there, is there anything, who are you and where do you come from, what did you see and hear when you were there?—in a hundred ways they try to make us wake up, clear our minds, and face reality directly. While people pursue various paths, the inexorable laws of cause and effect will be their inconceivable partner on every turn of every path, regardless of the conceptions we may have about what is going on. The effort of the student is an essential ingredient in Ch'an, so explanation is minimal.

The format of this translation of *The Blue Cliff Record* is as follows:

POINTER: introduction by Yuan Wu, missing in some cases.

CASE: the *kung an*, public case record from Ch'an tradition or Buddhist scripture.

NOTES: remarks by Yuan Wu at certain points in each case; in Chinese texts, notes are put right in the text, but we have separated them out and listed them in Western footnote style after each case, to preserve the continuity of the original story for ease of reading.

COMMENTARY: by Yuan Wu on each case.

VERSE: by Hsueh Tou, interspersed with remarks by Yuan Wu; the lines of the verses are more individual units in form and content than prose sections, so the notes, though visually distinguished, are left between the lines of verse. Cases and verses should be read both as wholes all at once, and with notes at every step.

COMMENTARY: by Yuan Wu, on verse and its relation to the case.

Due to the burning of the book, some parts of the commentaries and remarks are thought to have been lost or replaced. Fortunately, this is not a presentation of a system, and while the happenings reflect on each other, they do so by their own coherence; southern Ch'an was known as the "abrupt school," and its expression tends to be concise and quintessential. It is said that if one thoroughly penetrates one phrase, one penetrates innumerable phrases at the same time.

Monks' names consist of two two-syllable names; a place name, epithet, or title, and an individual initiatory name. Exceptions to this custom are self-evident and do not need special treatment. Of famous monks, usually only the first name of two syllables (generally the place name—of the mountain, monastery, or city, etc., where the master lived and taught) is used, or, when already mentioned in the context, the second syllable of the first name. In the case of later monks teaching in the same places as famous ancient masters, the whole first name and the second name or second syllable of the second name are used. We have generally followed this custom. Diacritical marks are omitted from Sanskrit names as well as from Japanese names and terms. Translator's notes are marked by letters of the alphabet and listed after the end of each case.

#### NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

1. Japanese *Hekiganroku*; also called *Pi Yen Chi*, Japanese *Hekigan-shu*.
2. The term "public cases" or "public records" (*kung an*; *koan*) likens the Ch'an stories to law cases, legal precedents, according to which a determination—here, the understanding of a student—is made.
3. According to the *Hsu Kao Seng Chuan* (ca. 645), Bodhidharma arrived in China during the Liu Sung dynasty (420–479); according to the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* (1004), a Ch'an history, he arrived in 520.
4. "Seal of Faith in the Heart." The heart is the enlightened mind; faith is in the enlightened mind inherent in all sentient beings, the potential of Buddhahood; the seal is an impression or inscription, also a name of a form of poem.
5. This book is lost, but a good deal of material quite probably excerpted from it is to be found in the *Leng Chia Shih Tzu Chi*, "Record of Masters and Disciples of the Lankavatara," a short Ch'an history written by a member of the northern school.





# Guide to Chinese Pronunciation

*According to the transcription method used in The Blue Cliff Record, based on the modified Wade-Giles system*

<i>Chinese</i>	<i>English approximation</i>
a	father
ai	eye
ao	how
ch	j
ch'	ch
e	but (n.b. er(h) sounds like <i>are</i> , ei sounds like <i>hay</i> )
f	f
h	h
i	pin (ih sounds like <i>her</i> )
hs	sure
k	g
k'	k
l	l
m	m
n	n
o	but (only when whole syllable consists of o; otherwise, o sounds like <i>thaw</i> ); ou sounds like <i>throw</i>
p	b
p'	p
r	no equivalent; resembles mix of French j and English r
s	s
sh	sh (palatalized hs)
sz	s (only in szu, which resembles <i>certain</i> )

t	d
t'	t
ts	dz
ts'	ts
tz	dz (these two only before u; see sz)
tz'	ts
u	put (ui=way, ua=wa, uo=waw, ueh=ywe)
w	w
y	y

This does not exhaust the intricacies of Chinese phonetics but is intended to help the reader with a reasonably comfortable and accurate way of reading Chinese names.

# Original Preface to The Blue Cliff Record

The lifeline of the perfect sages, the great capacity of the successive Patriarchs, the miraculous method of changing the bones, the wondrous art of nourishing the spirit—the Ch'an Master Hsueh Tou had the true eye which transcends any sect and goes beyond patterns; he upheld the true imperative and did not reveal a customary standard. He took up the hammer and tongs to smelt and forge Buddhas and Patriarchs, and versified the transcendental noses of the patchrobed monks. A silver mountain, an iron wall; who could dare try to bore in? A mosquito trying to bite an iron ox cannot manage to penetrate. If you do not meet a great Master, how can you thoroughly comprehend the abstruse subtleties?

Here there is an old man, Yuan Wu, when he was dwelling at the Blue Cliff, students were confused and asked him for instruction. The old man pitied them and therefore extended his compassion; he dug out the profound source and elucidated the underlying principles. Directly pointing at the ultimate, how could he have set up any opinionated understanding? The hundred public cases are pierced through on one thread from the beginning; the whole crowd of old fellows are all judged in turn.

You should know that the jewel of Chao was flawless to begin with; Hsiang Ju brazenly fooled the king of Ch'in. The ultimate path is in reality wordless; masters of our school extend compassion to rescue the fallen. If you see it like this, only then do you realize their thoroughgoing kindness. If, on the other hand, you get stuck on the phrases and sunk in the words, you won't avoid exterminating the Buddha's race.

P'u Chao was fortunate to be close to the Master's seat and was able to hear what he had never heard before. Companions in the Way compiled it into a volume, and this stupid oaf has reported the root and branches of the matter.

At the time it is the last day of the month in late spring,

1128. The monk P'u Chao, a participant in the study and successor to the Patriarchs, humbly writes this preface.

\* \* \* \* \*

A long time ago a king offered to trade fifteen cities to another king in exchange for a single jewel. When the emissary came with the jewel and handed it over, he saw that the first king was reluctant to part with his cities; he then recovered the jewel by claiming it was flawed and threatened to smash it unless the king honored his part of the bargain, whereat the king relented. Unless we are willing to give up our attachments, we cannot appreciate the priceless jewel of our true nature. Each case of the Blue Cliff Record shows us not only where to find the jewel, but also how to dig it out and cut and polish it to bring out its inherent beauty and magnificence.

# The Blue Cliff Record



# The Highest Meaning of the Holy Truths

## POINTER

When you see smoke on the other side of a mountain, you already know there's a fire; when you see horns on the other side of a fence, right away you know there's an ox there. To understand three when one is raised, to judge precisely at a glance—this is the everyday food and drink of a patchrobed monk. Getting to where he cuts off the myriad streams, he is free to arise in the east and sink in the west, to go against or to go with, in any and all directions, free to give or to take away. But say, at just such a time, whose actions are these? Look into Hsueh Tou's trailing vines.

## CASE

Emperor Wu of Liang asked the great master Bodhidharma,<sup>1</sup> "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?"<sup>2</sup> Bodhidharma said, "Empty, without holiness."<sup>3</sup> The Emperor said, "Who is facing me?"<sup>4</sup> Bodhidharma replied, "I don't know."<sup>5</sup> The Emperor did not understand.<sup>6</sup> After this Bodhidharma crossed the Yangtse River and came to the kingdom of Wei.<sup>7</sup>

Later the Emperor brought this up to Master Chih and asked him about it.<sup>8</sup> Master Chih asked, "Does your majesty know who this man is?"<sup>9</sup> The Emperor said, "I don't know."<sup>10</sup> Master Chih said, "He is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal."<sup>11</sup> The Emperor felt regretful, so he wanted to send an emissary to go invite (Bodhidharma to return).<sup>12</sup> Master Chih told him, "Your majesty, don't say that you will send someone to fetch him back.<sup>13</sup> Even if everyone in the whole country were to go after him, he still wouldn't return."<sup>14</sup>

## NOTES

1. This dull fellow speaks up.
2. What a donkey-tethering stake this is.
3. Wu considered this answer rather extraordinary. The arrow has flown past Korea. Very clear.
4. Wu is filled with embarrassment, forcing himself to be astute. As it turns out, he gropes without finding.
5. Bah! His second reply isn't worth half a cent.
6. Too bad! Still, he's gotten somewhere.
7. This wild fox spirit! He can't avoid embarrassment. He crosses from west to east, he crosses from east to west.
8. A poor man thinks about an old debt. The bystander has eyes.
9. Wu should chase Master Chih out of the country too; Chih should be given thirty blows. Bodhidharma has come.
10. After all this is Emperor Wu's understanding of Bodhidharma's public case.
11. Chih explains haphazardly. The elbow doesn't bend outwards.
12. After all, Bodhidharma couldn't be held. As I said before, Wu is dull.
13. When someone in the eastern house dies, someone of the western house joins in the mourning. Better they should be all driven out of the country at once.
14. Again Master Chih deserves thirty blows. He doesn't know that the great illumination shines forth from under his own feet.

## COMMENTARY

From afar Bodhidharma saw that this country (China) had people capable of the Great Vehicle, so he came by sea, intent on his mission, purely to transmit the Mind Seal, to arouse and instruct those mired in delusion. Without establishing written words, he pointed directly to the human mind (for them) to see nature and fulfill Buddhahood. If you can see this way, then you will have your share of freedom. Never again will you be turned around pursuing words, and everything will be completely revealed. Thereafter you will be able to converse with Emperor Wu and you will naturally be able to see how the Second Patriarch's mind was pacified.<sup>a</sup> Without the mental defilements of judgement and comparison, everything is cut



off, and you are free and at ease. What need is there to go on distinguishing right and wrong, or discriminating gain and loss? Even so, how many people are capable of this?

Emperor Wu had put on monk's robes and personally expounded the *Light-Emitting Wisdom Scripture*; he experienced heavenly flowers falling in profusion and the earth turning to gold. He studied the Path and humbly served the Buddha, issuing orders throughout his realm to build temples and ordain monks, and practicing in accordance with the Teaching. People called him the Buddha Heart Emperor.

When Bodhidharma first met Emperor Wu, the Emperor asked, "I have built temples and ordained monks; what merit is there in this?" Bodhidharma said, "There is no merit." He immediately doused the Emperor with dirty water. If you can penetrate this statement, "There is no merit," you can meet Bodhidharma personally. Now tell me, why is there no merit at all in building temples and ordaining monks? Where does the meaning of this lie?

Emperor Wu held discussions with Dharma Master Lou Yueh, with Mahasattva Fu, and with Prince Chao Ming about the two truths, the real and the conventional. As it says in the Teachings, by the real truth we understand that it is not existent; by the conventional truth we understand that it is not nonexistent. That the real truth and the conventional truth are not two is the highest meaning of the holy truths. This is the most esoteric, most abstruse point of the doctrinal schools. Hence the Emperor picked out this ultimate paradigm to ask Bodhidharma, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?" Bodhidharma answered, "Empty, without holiness." No monk in the world can leap clear of this. Bodhidharma gives them a single swordblow that cuts off everything. These days how people misunderstand! They go on giving play to their spirits, put a glare in their eyes and say, "Empty, without holiness!" Fortunately, this has nothing to do with it.

My late Master Wu Tsu once said, "If only you can penetrate 'empty, without holiness,' then you can return home and sit in peace." All this amounts to creating complications; still, it does not stop Bodhidharma from smashing the lacquer bucket<sup>b</sup> for others. Among all, Bodhidharma is most extraordinary. So it is said, "If you can penetrate a single phrase, at the same moment you will penetrate a thousand phrases, ten thousand

phrases." Then naturally you can cut off, you can hold still. An Ancient said, "Crushing your bones and dismembering your body would not be sufficient requital; when a single phrase is clearly understood, you leap over hundreds of millions."

Bodhidharma confronted the Emperor directly; how he indulged! The Emperor did not awaken; instead, because of his notions of self and others, he asked another question, "Who is facing me?" Bodhidharma's compassion was excessive; again he addressed him, saying, "I don't know." At this, Emperor Wu was taken aback; he did not know what Bodhidharma meant. When you get to this point, as to whether there is something or there isn't anything, pick and you fail.

Master Shou Tuan had a verse which said,

*Ordinarily a single arrow fells a single eagle;  
Another arrow is already too many.  
Bodhidharma goes right back to sit before Few  
Houses Peak;  
O Lord of Liang, speak no more of going to summon  
him.*

He also said, "Who wants to summon him back?"

Since Emperor Wu did not understand, Bodhidharma secretly left the country; all this old fellow got was embarrassment. He crossed the Yangtse River into Wei; at the time, the Hsiao Ming Emperor of Wei was reigning there. This emperor belonged to a northern tribe named Toba, who were later to call themselves Chinese. When Bodhidharma arrived there, he did not appear for any more audiences, but went directly to Shao Lin Monastery, where he sat facing a wall for nine years, and met the Second Patriarch. People thereabouts called him "The Wall-Gazing Brahmin."

Emperor Wu of Liang later questioned Master Chih. Chih said, "Does your majesty know who this man is?" The Emperor said, "I don't know." Tell me, is this ("I don't know") the same as what Bodhidharma said, or is it different? In appearance it indeed seems the same, but in reality isn't. People often misunderstand and say, "Before, when Bodhidharma said 'I don't know' he was replying about Ch'an; later, when Emperor answered Master Chih, this referred to the 'knowledge' of mutual acquaintance." This is irrelevant. Tell me, when Master Chih questioned him, how could Wu have answered? Why

didn't he strike Chih dead with a single blow and avoid being seen as a fool? Instead Emperor Wu answered Master Chih sincerely and said, "I don't know." Master Chih saw his chance and acted; he said, "This is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal." The Emperor felt regret and was going to send an emissary to bring Bodhidharma back. How stupid! When Chih said, "This is Mahasattva Avalokitesvara transmitting the Buddha Mind Seal," if Wu had driven him out of the country, this would have amounted to something.

According to tradition, Master Chih died in the year 514, while Bodhidharma came to Liang in 520; since there is a seven year discrepancy, why is it said that the two met? This must be a mistake in the tradition. As to what is recorded in tradition, I will not discuss this matter now. All that's important is to understand the gist of the matter. Tell me, Bodhidharma is Avalokitesvara, Master Chih is Avalokitesvara, but which is the true Avalokitesvara? Since it is Avalokitesvara, why are there two? But why only two? They are legion.

Later in Wei, Bodhidharma debated with the Vinaya Master Kuang T'ung and the canonical master Bodhiruci. The Master Bodhidharma eliminated formalism and pointed to mind; because of their biased judgments, (the other two) would not put up with this, and instead developed feelings of malevolence and tried to poison Bodhidharma several times. On the sixth attempt, since his mission was completed and he had found someone to succeed to the Dharma, Bodhidharma made no further attempt to save himself, but sat upright and passed on. He was buried at Tinglin Temple on Bear Ear Mountain. Afterwards, while Sung Yun of Wei was on a mission, he met the Master in the Ts'ung Ling Range (in Sinkiang), carrying one shoe in his hand, returning (to India).

Emperor Wu mourned Bodhidharma's death and personally wrote an inscription for his monument. It read, "Alas! I saw him without seeing him, I met him without meeting him, I encountered him without encountering him; now as before I regret this deeply." He further eulogized him by saying, "If your mind exists, you are stuck in the mundane for eternity; if your mind does not exist, you experience wondrous enlightenment instantly."

Tell me, where is Bodhidharma right now? You've stumbled past him without even realizing it.

## VERSE

*The holy truths are empty;*

*\*\*The arrow has flown past Korea. Ha!\**

*How can you discern the point!*

*\*\*Wrong. What is there that's hard to discern!\**

*"Who is facing me?"*

*\*\*The second try isn't worth half a cent. So you too go on like this.\**

*Again he said, "I don't know."*

*\*\*A third man, a fourth man hits the mark. Bah!\**

*Henceforth, he secretly crossed the river;*

*\*\*He could not pierce another's nostrils, but his own nostrils have been pierced by someone else.<sup>c</sup> What a pity! He sure isn't a great man.\**

*How could he avoid the growth of a thicket of brambles!*

*\*\*The brambles are already several yards deep beneath his feet.\**

*Though everyone in the whole country goes after him, he will not return;*

*\*\*A double case. What's the use of pursuing him! Where is he! Where is the spirit of a great man!\**

*(Wu) goes on and on vainly reflecting back.*

*\*\*He wrings his hands and beats his breast, addressing a plea to the sky.\**

*Give up recollection!*

*\*\*What are you saying! You are making a living in a ghost cave.\**

*What limit is there to the pure wind circling the earth!*

*\*\*After all, the great Hsueh Tou is rolling around in the weeds.\**

*The Master Hsueh Tou looked around to the right and left and said,*

*"Is there any patriarch here?"*

*\*\*So you want to retract your statement! You still act like this!\**

*He answered himself, "There is."*

*\*\*Too much trouble.\**

*"Call him here to wash this old monk's feet."*

*\*\*Give him thirty more blows and drive him away—this wouldn't be more than he deserves. Though he acts like this, he still amounts to something.\**

#### COMMENTARY

Now as for Hsueh Tou's verse on this case, it is like skillfully doing a sword dance; sure and relaxed in mid-air, he naturally does not run afoul of the sharp point. If he lacked this kind of ability, as soon as he picked it up we would see him run afoul of the point and wound his hand. For those who have the eye to see, Hsueh Tou offers, takes back, praises, and deprecates, using only four lines to settle the entire public case.

Generally, eulogies of the Ancients express Ch'an in a roundabout way, picking out the main principles of the old story, settling the case on the basis of the facts, and that is all. Hsueh Tou gives a thrust and says right off, "The holy truths are empty—how can you discern the point?" Beneath that first phrase, he adds this one, which is quite extraordinary. Tell me, after all how will you discern the point? Even if you have an iron eye or a copper eye, still you will search without finding.

When you get here, can you figure it out by means of emotive consciousness? This is why Yun Men said, "It is like flint struck sparks, like flashing lightning." This little bit does not fall within the scope of mental activity, intellectual consciousness, or emotional conceptions. If you wait till you open your mouth, what good will it do? As soon as judgement and comparison arise, the falcon has flown past Korea.

Hsueh Tou says, "How will all you monks distinguish the real point? Who is facing the Emperor?" He adds the line, "Again he said, 'I don't know.'" This is where Hsueh Tou is excessively doting, redoubling his efforts to help people. Now tell me, are "empty" and "I don't know" the same or different? If you are someone who has personally understood completely, you will understand without anything being said. Someone

who has not understood completely will undoubtedly separate them into two. Everywhere everyone always says, "Hsueh Tou (merely) brings up (the case) again." They are far from knowing that (the first) four lines of the verse complete the case entirely.

For the sake of compassion, Hsueh Tou versifies what happened: "Henceforth (Bodhidharma) secretly crossed the river; how could he avoid the growth of a thicket of brambles?" Bodhidharma originally came to this country to melt the sticking points, untie the bonds, pull out the nails and draw out the pegs, to cut down brambles for people: why then say that he gave rise to a thicket of brambles? This is not confined to those times; today the brambles under everyone's feet are already several yards deep. "Though everyone in the whole country goes after him, he will not come back; (Wu) goes on and on vainly reflecting back." Obviously Wu is not a powerful man. Tell me, where is Bodhidharma? If you see Bodhidharma, then you see where Hsueh Tou helps people in the end.

Hsueh Tou feared that people would pursue intellectual views, so he swung open the gate and brought out his own understanding, saying, "Give up recollecting; what limit is there to the pure wind circling the earth?" Once you give up recollection, what will become of the affairs you busy yourselves with? Hsueh Tou says, here and now the pure wind is circling the earth. Throughout heaven and earth, what is there that is limited? Hsueh Tou picks up the numberless concerns of all ages and throws them down before you. This is not confined to Hsueh Tou's time. What limit is there? All of you people—what limit is there on your part?

Again Hsueh Tou feared that people would grab ahold at this point, so again he exposed his skill; in a loud voice he asked, "Is there any patriarch here?" And he answered himself, "There is." Hsueh Tou doesn't hesitate to bare his heart entirely here for the sake of others. Again he spoke up himself: "Call him here to wash this old monk's feet." He certainly diminishes the man's dignity, but at the same time he properly offers his own hands and feet as well. Tell me, where does Hsueh Tou's meaning lie? When you get here, can you call it an ass? Can you call it a horse? Can you call it a patriarch? How can it be named or depicted? The frequently expressed opinion that Hsueh Tou is employing the Patriarch fortunately has nothing to do with it. But tell me, after all what's going on

here? "I only allow that the old barbarian knows; I don't allow that the old barbarian understands."

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Bodhidharma, the first Patriarch of Ch'an in China, was asked by Hui K'e (Shen Kuang), the future Second Patriarch, to pacify his mind for him; Bodhidharma said, "Bring me your mind and I will pacify it for you." Hui K'e said, "When I search for my mind, I cannot find it." Bodhidharma said, "I have pacified your mind for you." At this Hui K'e was enlightened.
- b. A lacquer bucket, pitch black, is a Ch'an metaphor for ignorance; to have "the bottom fall out of the bucket" is to become suddenly enlightened. To smash the bucket means to become enlightened or to enlighten others.
- c. To pierce someone's nostrils, as in putting a ring through a bull's nose, means to master, to take control, to seize the advantage and have the upper hand. When one's nostrils are in another's hands, it means that one has been "caught," even be it metaphysically, so to speak.

# The Ultimate Path is Without Difficulty

## POINTER

Heaven and earth are narrow; sun, moon, and stars all at once go dark. Even if blows of the staff fall like rain and shouts roll like thunder, you still haven't lived up to the task of the fundamental vehicle of transcendence. Even the Buddhas of the three times can only know it for themselves; the successive generations of patriarchs have not been able to bring it up in its entirety. The treasury of teachings of the whole age cannot explain it thoroughly; clear eyed patchrobed monks cannot save themselves completely. When you get here, how will you ask for more instruction? To say the word "Buddha" is trailing mud and dripping water; to say the word "Ch'an" is a face full of shame. Superior people who have studied for a long time do not wait for it to be said; latecoming beginners simply must investigate and apprehend it.

## CASE

Chao Chou, teaching the assembly, said,<sup>1</sup> "The Ultimate Path is without difficulty;<sup>2</sup> just avoid picking and choosing.<sup>3</sup> As soon as there are words spoken, "this is picking and choosing," "this is clarity."<sup>4</sup> This old monk does not abide within clarity;<sup>5</sup> do you still preserve anything or not?"<sup>6</sup>

At that time a certain monk asked, "Since you do not abide within clarity, what do you preserve?"<sup>7</sup>

Chao Chou replied, "I don't know either."<sup>8</sup>

The monk said, "Since you don't know, Teacher, why do you nevertheless say that you do not abide within clarity?"<sup>9</sup>

Chao Chou said, "It is enough to ask about the matter; bow and withdraw."<sup>10</sup>



## NOTES

1. What's the old fellow doing? Don't create complications!
2. Not hard, not easy.
3. What's in front of your eyes? The Third Patriarch is still alive.
4. Two heads, three faces. A little boasting. When a fish swims through, the water is muddied; when a bird flies by, feathers fall.
5. His thieving intent already shows; where is the old fellow going?
6. He's defeated. Still there's something, or a half.
7. The monk presses him well; his tongue is pressed against the roof of his mouth.
8. (The monk) crushed this old fellow dead; he has to fall back three thousand miles.
9. Look! Where is he going? He's chased him up a tree.
10. Lucky thing he has this move; the old thief!

## COMMENTARY

Chao Chou always used to bring up this saying; that is, "Just avoid picking and choosing." This is from the Third Patriarch's *Seal of Faith in the Heart*, which says,

*The Ultimate Path is without difficulty;  
Just avoid picking and choosing.  
Just don't love or hate,  
And you'll be lucid and clear.*

As soon as you have affirmation and negation, "this is picking and choosing," "this is clarity." As soon as you understand this way, you have already stumbled past. When you're riveted down or stuck in glue, what can you do? Chao Chou said, "This is picking and choosing, this is clarity." People these days who practice meditation and ask about the Path, if they do not remain within picking and choosing, then they settle down within clarity. "This old monk does not abide within clarity; do you still preserve anything or not?" All of you people tell me, since he is not within clarity, where is Chao Chou? And why does he still teach people to preserve?

My late master Wu Tsu often would say, "I reach my hand down to show you, but how do you understand?" But tell me,

where does he reach down his hand? Perceive the meaning on the hook; don't stick by the zero point of the scale.

This monk coming forth was undeniably extraordinary; he got ahold of Chao Chou's gap and proceeded to press him: "Since you do not abide within clarity, what do you preserve?" Chao Chou never used the staff or the shout; he just said, "I don't know either." When being pressed by that (monk), anyone but this old fellow would time and again be at a loss. Fortunately this old fellow Chao Chou had freedom to turn himself around in, so he answered him like this. Many followers of Ch'an these days will also say when asked, "I don't know either; I don't understand." Nevertheless, though they are on the same road, they are not in the same groove.

There was something special about this monk; only thus could he ask, "Since you don't know, Teacher, why do you nevertheless say that you do not abide within clarity?" Another good rejoinder! If it had been someone other than Chao Chou, he never would have been able to explain. But Chao Chou is an adept; he just said to him, "It's enough to ask about the matter; bow and withdraw." As before, the monk had no way to cope with this old fellow; all he could do was suck in his breath and swallow his voice.

This is a very capable teacher of our clan; he does not discuss the abstruse or the mysterious, he does not speak of mentality or perspectives<sup>a</sup> with you—he always deals with people in terms of the fundamental matter. Thus he would have said, "When we're reviling each other, I let you clamp beaks with me; when we're spitting at each other, I let you spew me with slobber." It is hardly known that while Chao Chou ordinarily never used beating or shouting to deal with people, and only used ordinary speech, still no one in the world could handle him. It was all because he never had so many calculating judgements: he could pick up sideways and use upside-down, go against or go with, having attained great freedom. People today do not understand this, and just say that Chao Chou did not answer the question or explain it to the man. How little you realize that you've stumbled past it.

#### VERSE

*The Ultimate Path is without difficulty:*

*\*\*A triple case. A mouthful of frost. What is he saying? \**

*The speech is to the point, the words are to the point.*

*\*\*When the fish swims through, the stream is muddied.  
A profusion of confusion; he smeared it.\**

*In one there are many kinds;*

*\*\*You should open it up; what end will there be in just  
one kind!\**

*In two there's no duality.*

*\*\*How could it sustain four, five, six, seven?  
Why create complications!\**

*On the horizon of the sky the sun rises and the moon sets;*

*\*\*It's presented right to your face; above the head  
and beneath the feet it extends boundlessly. Don't  
lift or lower your head.\**

*Beyond the balustrade, the mountains deepen, the waters  
grow chill.*

*\*\*Once dead, you don't return to life again. Do you feel  
the hairs on your body stand on end in a chill!\**

*When the skull's consciousness is exhausted, how can joy re-  
main?*

*\*\*He twinkles his eyes within his coffin. Workman Lu  
(Hui Neng, the Sixth Patriarch) is a fellow student of  
his.\**

*In a dead tree the dragon murmurs are not yet exhausted.*

*\*\*Bah! The dead tree blooms again. Bodhidharma  
travels through the eastern land.\**

*Difficult, difficult!*

*\*\*A false teaching is hard to uphold.  
An upside-down statement. What place  
is this here, to speak of difficulty or ease!\**

*Picking and choosing! Clarity! You see for yourself!*

*\*\*Blind! One might have thought it depended on some-  
one else, but luckily (he says) 'See for yourself.' It's  
none of my business.\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou knows where Chao Chou comes down; therefore he versifies like this: "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties." Then immediately following this, he says, "The speech is to the point, the words are to the point." He raises one corner, but

doesn't come back with the other three; when Hsueh Tou says, "In one there are many kinds; in two there's no duality," this is like three corners returning to one. But tell me, where is it that words are to the point, and speech is to the point? In one, why are nevertheless many kinds, yet in two there is no duality? If you don't have eyes, where will you seek?

If you can penetrate these two lines, this is the basis of the ancient saying, "Fused into one whole, as of old you see that mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, long is long, short is short, sky is sky, and earth is earth." But sometimes we call sky earth and earth sky, sometimes we say that mountains are not mountains and rivers are not rivers. Ultimately, how to attain imperturbable tranquility? When the wind comes, the trees move; when the waves swell, the boats ride high. In spring it sprouts, in summer it matures, in fall it is harvested, in winter it is stored; with uniform equanimity, everything disappears of itself.

Thus this four-line verse abruptly cuts off; but Hsueh Tou has extra ability, so he opens up the closed bag and gives a summary account. As he said at first,

*The Ultimate Path is without difficulty;  
Speech is to the point, words are to the point.  
In one there are many kinds;  
In two there is no duality.*

Though there aren't so many things, when the sun rises over the horizon the moon goes down, and when the mountains beyond the balustrade deepen, the waters grow cold. When you get here, speech is indeed to the point, words are indeed to the point, everything is the Path and all things are completely real. Isn't this where mind and objects are both forgotten, fused into one whole? At the beginning of the verse Hsueh Tou was too solitary and steep; at the end, though, he is quite indulgent. If you can bore right through and see and penetrate, naturally it will be like the excellent flavor of ghee. If you don't forget your emotional interpretations, then you'll see a profusion of confusion, and you definitely won't understand this kind of talk.

"When the skull's consciousness is exhausted, how can joy remain? In the dead tree, dragon murmurs are not yet ended." This is just a bit of combination. These are from public cases of ancient questions about the Path, which Hsueh Tou has drawn

out, pierced through and strung on the same thread to use in versifying "The Ultimate Path is without difficulty; just avoid picking and choosing." People these days don't understand the Ancient's meaning, and only chew on the words and gnaw on the phrases; when will they ever be done? If you are an adept who is a master of technique, only then can you understand this kind of talk.

Haven't you read how a monk asked Hsiang Yen, "What is the Path?" Hsiang Yen said, "In a dead tree, dragon murmurings." The monk asked, "What is a man of the Path?" Hsiang Yen said, "Eyeballs in a skull." Later the monk asked Shih Shuang, "What are 'dragon murmurings in a dead tree'?" Shih Shuang said, "Still having joy." The monk asked, "What are eyeballs in a skull?" Shih Shuang said, "Still having consciousness." The monk also asked Ts'ao Shan, "What are 'dragon murmurings in a dead tree'?" Ts'ao Shan said, "The blood line is not cut off." The monk asked, "What are 'eyeballs in a skull'?" Ts'ao Shan said, "Not dried up." The monk asked, "Who can hear this?" Ts'ao Shan said, "In the whole world, there is no one who does not hear it." The monk asked, "What book is 'dragon murmurings' taken from?" Ts'ao Shan said, "I don't know what book it's from, but all who hear it die." He also had a verse which said,

*In a dead tree the dragon murmurs and truly sees  
the Path;  
When the skull has no consciousness, only then are  
the eyes clear.  
When joy and consciousness come to an end, all  
happenings are ended;  
How can such a one discriminate the pure in the  
midst of impurity?*

Hsueh Tou can be said to possess great skill in combining all this at once in his verse. Though he has done this, there's been no duality at all.

Hsueh Tou had help for people at the end of the verse when he added "Difficult, difficult!" It's exactly this "difficult, difficult," that you must penetrate through in order to attain. Why? Pai Chang said, "All words and speech, mountains, rivers, and the great earth, each come back to oneself." Whatever Hsueh Tou offers and takes back must ultimately be returned

to oneself. Tell me, how did Hsueh Tou help people when he said, "Picking and choosing? Clarity? See for yourself!'"? He had already created this complicated verse; why then did he say "See for yourself"? Tell me, what was his true meaning? Don't say you can't understand. At this point, even I simply cannot understand either.

### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. *Chi* and *ching*, rendered in this instance as 'mentality and perspective,' are very common technical terms, to be met with many times in this book, used individually and as a pair. Both are used in referring to both subjective and objective phenomena; in Ch'an meditation they sometimes speak of 'forgetting' or 'merging' subject and object; likewise, as 'turning words' or 'pivotal words,' these terms produce, individually and together, an effect which cannot be rendered conveniently in a single English expression.

*Chi* is used for 'potential' (as of a student, or a situation), 'capability,' or a 'device' used to illustrate a point or state; it also means mental activity or state in general. Sometimes the first, or primary *chi* is contrasted to the secondary *chi*; this is like 'cognition' followed by 'recognition.'

*Ching* is a mental object, an object, a state, a realm or sphere, a perspective (or perception). A common question is what a master's *ching* is like (i.e. what does he 'see,' what is his sphere or state of realization), and what the person in that 'realm' is like. When Ch'an students experienced purity or bliss, or perceived Buddhas and bodhisattvas in their meditations, they were told these were merely *ching*, mental objects or 'states' which should not be acknowledged as desirable or approved as real attainments, lest one become intoxicated by one's state. Similarly, all kinds of hallucinations were called *mo ching* or 'demon states,' illusory objects or perceptions caused by 'demons' or 'devils' (whether these are inside or outside the mind is a pointless question here), obstructing the path of meditation.

As examples of *chi-ching*, Japanese commentaries conventionally refer to such things as 'twinkling the eyes,' 'raising the eyebrows,' 'raising the staff, the whisk, or the gavel,' gestures frequently met with in Ch'an records as replies to questions, or

teaching devices of the masters. *Chi-ching* thus means the mentality, or mental working, and the perspective, or object it embraces; an act and the state it manifests, a device and the object(ive) it intends to convey. Ultimately, it seems that these terms can refer to any action or speech and the implication or impression it presents or represents, especially the intentional gesture or remark of the teaching master.

sixteen-foot golden body (of Buddha); sometimes I take the sixteen-foot golden body and use it as a blade of grass.

Originally Te Shan was a lecturing monk, expounding the *Diamond Cutter Scripture* in western Shu (Szechuan). According to what it says in that teaching, in the process of the knowledge attained after diamond-like concentration, one studies the majestic conduct of Buddhas for a thousand aeons and studies the refined practices of Buddhas for ten thousand aeons before finally fulfilling Buddhahood. On the other hand, the "southern devils" at this time were saying "Mind itself is Buddha." Consequently Te Shan became very incensed and went travelling on foot, carrying some commentaries; he went straight to the South to destroy this crew of devils. You see from how aroused he got what a fierce keen fellow he was.

When he first got to Li Chou (in Hunan), he met an old woman selling fried cakes by the roadside; he put down his commentaries to buy some refreshment to lighten his mind. The old woman said, "What is that you're carrying?" Te Shan said, "Commentaries on the *Diamond Cutter Scripture*." The old woman said, "I have a question for you: if you can answer it I'll give you some fried cakes to refresh your mind; if you can't answer, you'll have to go somewhere else to buy." Te Shan said, "Just ask." The old woman said, "The *Diamond Cutter Scripture* says, 'Past mind can't be grasped, present mind can't be grasped, future mind can't be grasped': which mind does the learned monk desire to refresh?" Te Shan was speechless. The old woman directed him to go call on Lung T'an.

As soon as Te Shan crossed the threshold he said, "Long have I heard of Lung T'an ('Dragon Pond'), but now that I've arrived here, there's no pond to see and no dragon appears." Master Lung T'an came out from behind a screen and said, "You have really arrived at Lung T'an." Te Shan bowed and withdrew. During the night Te Shan entered Lung T'an's room and stood in attendance till late at night. Lung T'an said, "Why don't you go?" Te Shan bade farewell, lifted up the curtain, and went out; he saw that it was dark outside, so he turned around and said, "It's dark outside." Lung T'an lit a paper lantern and handed it to Te Shan; as soon as Te Shan took it, Lung T'an blew it out. Te Shan was vastly and greatly enlightened. Immediately he bowed to Lung T'an, who said, "What have you seen that you bow?" Te Shan answered, "From now on I will



teaching devices of the masters. *Chi-ching* thus means the mentality, or mental working, and the perspective, or object it embraces; an act and the state it manifests, a device and the object(ive) it intends to convey. Ultimately, it seems that these terms can refer to any action or speech and the implication or impression it presents or represents, especially the intentional gesture or remark of the teaching master.

# Master Ma is Unwell

## POINTER

One device, one object; one word, one phrase—the intent is that you'll have a place to enter; still this is gouging a wound in healthy flesh—it can become a nest or a den. The Great Function appears without abiding by fixed principles—the intent is that you'll realize there is something transcendental; it covers the sky and covers the earth, yet it cannot be grasped.

This way will do, not this way will do too—this is too diffuse. This way won't do, not this way won't do either—this is too cut off. Without treading these two paths, what would be right? Please test; I cite this for you to see:

## CASE

Great Master Ma was unwell.<sup>1</sup> The temple superintendent asked him, "Teacher, how has your venerable health been in recent days?"<sup>2</sup> The Great Master said, "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha."<sup>3,a</sup>

## NOTES

1. This fellow has broken down quite a bit. He's dragging in other people.
2. Four hundred and four diseases break out all at once. They'll be lucky if they're not seeing off a dead monk in three days. (This question) is in the course of humanity and righteousness.
3. How fresh and new! Sustenance for his fledgeling.

## COMMENTARY

The Great Master Ma was unwell, so the temple superintendent asked him, "Teacher, how has your venerable health been

in recent days?" The Great Master replied, "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha." If the patriarchal teachers had not dealt with others on the basis of the fundamental matter, how could we have the shining light of this Path? If you know what this public case comes down to, then you walk alone through the red sky; if you don't know where it comes down, time and again you'll lose the way before the withered tree cliff. If you are somebody in your own right, when you get here you must have the ability to drive off the plowman's ox and to snatch away the hungry man's food before you will see how Great Master Ma helps people.

These days many people say that Master Ma was teaching the superintendent; fortunately, this has no connection. Right now in this assembly there are many who misunderstand; they put a glare in their eyes and say, "It's here; the left eye is the Sun Face, and the right eye is the Moon Face." What relevance does this have? Even by the (non-existent) Year of the Ass, you won't have seen it even in a dream. You just stumble past, missing what the Ancient was about.

So when Master Ma spoke like this, where was his meaning? Some say (he meant) "Fix some stomach medicine and bring me a bowl of it." What grasp has this got on it? Having gotten to this point, how would you attain tranquility? This is why it is said, "The single road of transcendence has not been transmitted by a thousand sages; students trouble themselves with forms like monkeys grasping at reflections."

This "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha" is extremely difficult to see; even Hsueh Tou finds it difficult to versify this. But since he has seen all the way through, he uses his life's work to the full to make his comment. Do you people want to see Hsueh Tou? Look at the text below.

#### VERSE

*Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha;*

*\*\*When he opens his mouth you see his guts.*

*(Ma and Hsueh Tou) are like two facing mirrors;  
in between there's no image or reflection. \**

*What kind of people were the Ancient Emperors?*

*\*\*Too lofty. Don't belittle them. They  
can be valued high or low. \**

*For twenty years I have suffered bitterly;*

*\*\*This is your own fall into the weeds—  
it's none of my business. Here's a mute  
eating a bitter melon.\**

*How many times I have gone down into the Blue Dragon's  
cave for you!*

*\*\*How was it worth this! Don't misuse your mind.  
Don't say there isn't anything extraordinary here.\**

*This distress*

*\*\*He saddens people to death.  
Sad man, don't speak to sad people.\**

*Is worth recounting;*

*\*\*To whom would you speak of it!  
If you speak of it to sad people,  
you will sadden them to death.\**

*Clear-eyed patchrobed monks should not take it lightly.*

*\*\*You must be even more thoroughgoing. Bah! Fall  
back three thousand miles.\**

#### COMMENTARY

When (the Sung Emperor) Shen Tsung was on the throne (1068–1085) he thought that this verse ridiculed the state, so he wouldn't let it be included in the (Buddhist) canon.

First Hsueh Tou quotes: "Sun Face Buddha, Moon Face Buddha." Having brought this up, then he says, "What kind of people were the Ancient Emperors?" Tell me, what is his meaning? I just finished telling you a minute ago; Hsueh Tou is commenting directly (on Master Ma). So it is said, "Letting down his hook in the four seas, he only fishes for terrible dragons." This one line has already been completed (the verse); afterwards, Hsueh Tou versifies how he concentrated on study and search all his life.

"For twenty years I have suffered bitterly; how many times I've gone down into the Blue Dragon's cave for you!" What is he like? He's like a man going into the Blue Dragon's cave to seize the pearl. Afterwards he broke apart the lacquer bucket. Though this might be considered quite extraordinary, basically

it just amounts to "What kind of people were the Ancient Emperors?" Tell me, what are Hsueh Tou's words getting at? You have to take a step back on your own and look before you will see where he's at.

So what kind of people were the Ancient Emperors anyway? People mostly do not see Hsueh Tou's meaning, but only say that he is ridiculing the state. To understand in this way is merely an emotional view. This (line) comes from Ch'an Yueh's poem on "The behavior of barons," which says,

*Clothes in brocades and fine embroidery, with fal-  
cons on their wrists,  
They go about at leisure, their manner scornful.  
They know nothing of the difficulties of sowing and  
harvesting;  
What kind of people were the Ancient Emperors?*

Hsueh Tou says, "This distress is worth recounting; clear eyed patchrobed monks must not take it lightly." How many people make their livelihood within the Blue Dragon's cave? Even if you're a clear eyed patchrobed monk with an eye on your forehead and a talisman under your arm, shining through the four continents, when you get here you still must not take it lightly; you must be thoroughgoing.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. According to the *Buddha Name Scripture*, a Sun Face Buddha lives in the world for eighteen hundred years, whereas a Moon Face Buddha enters extinction after a day and a night. Tenkei Denson says, "But is everyone's own Sun Face Buddha Moon Face Buddha something long or short?"

# Te Shan Carrying His Bundle

## POINTER

Under the blue sky, in the bright sunlight, you don't have to point out this and that anymore; but the causal conditions of time and season still require you to give the medicine in accordance with the disease. But tell me, is it better to let go, or is it better to hold still? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

When Te Shan arrived at Kuei Shan,<sup>1</sup> he carried his bundle with him into the teaching hall,<sup>2</sup> where he crossed from east to west and from west to east.<sup>3</sup> He looked around and said, "There's nothing, no one." Then he went out.<sup>4</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "Completely exposed."<sup>5</sup> But when Te Shan got to the monastery gate, he said, "Still, I shouldn't be so coarse."<sup>6</sup> So he reentered (the hall) with full ceremony to meet (Kuei Shan).<sup>7</sup> As Kuei Shan sat there,<sup>8</sup> Te Shan held up his sitting mat and said, "Teacher!"<sup>9</sup> Kuei Shan reached for his whisk,<sup>10</sup> whereupon Te Shan shouted, shook out his sleeves, and left.<sup>11</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "Completely exposed."<sup>12</sup>

Te Shan turned his back on the teaching hall, put on his straw sandals, and departed.<sup>13</sup> That evening Kuei Shan asked the head monk, "Where is that newcomer who just came?"<sup>14</sup> The head monk answered, "At that time he turned his back on the teaching hall, put on his straw sandals, and departed."<sup>15</sup>

Kuei Shan said, "Hereafter that lad will go to the summit of a solitary peak, build himself a grass hut, and go on scolding the Buddhas and reviling the Patriarchs."<sup>16</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "He adds frost to snow."<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

1. The board-carrying fellow,<sup>a</sup> the wild fox spirit!<sup>b</sup>
2. Unavoidably he causes people to doubt. He has suffered defeat.
3. He has a lot of Ch'an, but what for?
4. He deserves thirty blows of the staff. Indeed his spirit reaches the heavens. A real lion cub can roar the lion's roar.
5. Wrong. After all. Check!
6. Letting go, gathering in. At first too high, in the end too low. When one realizes one's fault one should reform, but how many people can?
7. As before, he acts like this. It's already his second defeat. Danger!
8. (Kuei Shan) watches this fellow with cold eyes. It takes this kind of man to grab a tiger's whiskers.
9. He changes heads, switches faces; he stirs up waves where there's no wind.
10. Only that fellow could do this; he sets his strategy in motion from within his tent. Nothing can stop him from cutting off the tongues of everyone in the world.
11. This is the understanding of a wild fox spirit. This one shout contains both the provisional and the real, both the illumination and the function. They're all people who can grab the clouds and grasp the fog, but he is outstanding among them.
12. Wrong. After all. Check!
13. The scenery is lovely, but the case is not yet completed. (Te Shan) won the hat on his head but lost the shoes on his feet. He's already lost his body and his life.
14. He lost his interest in the east, and loses his principal in the west. His eyes look southeast, but his mind is in the northwest.
15. The sacred tortoise is dragging his tail;<sup>c</sup> he deserves thirty blows. How many blows to the back of the head would it take for this kind of fellow?
16. He draws his bow after the thief is gone. No patchrobed monk in the world can leap out of this.
17. Wrong. After all. Check!

## COMMENTARY

Three times I added the word "check." Do all of you understand? Sometimes I take a blade of grass and use it as the

sixteen-foot golden body (of Buddha); sometimes I take the sixteen-foot golden body and use it as a blade of grass.

Originally Te Shan was a lecturing monk, expounding the *Diamond Cutter Scripture* in western Shu (Szechuan). According to what it says in that teaching, in the process of the knowledge attained after diamond-like concentration, one studies the majestic conduct of Buddhas for a thousand aeons and studies the refined practices of Buddhas for ten thousand aeons before finally fulfilling Buddhahood. On the other hand, the "southern devils" at this time were saying "Mind itself is Buddha." Consequently Te Shan became very incensed and went travelling on foot, carrying some commentaries; he went straight to the South to destroy this crew of devils. You see from how aroused he got what a fierce keen fellow he was.

When he first got to Li Chou (in Hunan), he met an old woman selling fried cakes by the roadside; he put down his commentaries to buy some refreshment to lighten his mind. The old woman said, "What is that you're carrying?" Te Shan said, "Commentaries on the *Diamond Cutter Scripture*." The old woman said, "I have a question for you: if you can answer it I'll give you some fried cakes to refresh your mind; if you can't answer, you'll have to go somewhere else to buy." Te Shan said, "Just ask." The old woman said, "The *Diamond Cutter Scripture* says, 'Past mind can't be grasped, present mind can't be grasped, future mind can't be grasped': which mind does the learned monk desire to refresh?" Te Shan was speechless. The old woman directed him to go call on Lung T'an.

As soon as Te Shan crossed the threshold he said, "Long have I heard of Lung T'an ('Dragon Pond'), but now that I've arrived here, there's no pond to see and no dragon appears." Master Lung T'an came out from behind a screen and said, "You have really arrived at Lung T'an." Te Shan bowed and withdrew. During the night Te Shan entered Lung T'an's room and stood in attendance till late at night. Lung T'an said, "Why don't you go?" Te Shan bade farewell, lifted up the curtain, and went out; he saw that it was dark outside, so he turned around and said, "It's dark outside." Lung T'an lit a paper lantern and handed it to Te Shan; as soon as Te Shan took it, Lung T'an blew it out. Te Shan was vastly and greatly enlightened. Immediately he bowed to Lung T'an, who said, "What have you seen that you bow?" Te Shan answered, "From now on I will



never again doubt what's on the tongues of the venerable teaching masters of the world."

The next day Lung T'an went up into the teaching hall and said, "There is one among you with teeth like a forest of swords and a mouth like a bowl of blood; even if you hit him with a staff, he wouldn't turn back. Another day he will ascend to the summit of a solitary peak and establish my path there." Then Te Shan took all his commentaries in front of the teaching hall and raised a torch over them, declaring, "Even to plumb all abstruse locutions is like a single hair in the great void; to exhaust the essential workings of the world is like a single drop of water cast into a vast valley." Then he burned the commentaries.

Later he heard that Kuei Shan's teaching was flourishing, so he traveled to Kuei Shan to meet him as an adept. Without even untying his bundle, he went straight to the teaching hall, where he walked back and forth from east to west and west to east, looked around, and said, "Nothing, no one." Then he went out. Tell me, what was his meaning? Wasn't he crazy? People misinterpret this as 'establishment,' but that is simply irrelevant. See how extraordinary that Te Shan was; this is why it is said, "To stand out from the crowd, you must be a brave spirited fellow; to defeat enemies is a matter for a lion's son. If you try to become Buddha without an eye like this, how will you ever do it, even in a thousand years?"

When you get here, you must be a thoroughly competent adept before you will be able to see. Why? In the Buddha Dharma there are not so many complications; where can you bring intellectual views to bear? This is the action of (Te Shan's) mind; where is there so much toil? This is why Hsuan Sha said, "Even if you're like the moon reflected in an autumn pond, which when striking the waves is not scattered, or like the sound of a bell on a quiet night, which when hit never fails to resound, this is still an affair on this shore of birth and death." When you arrive here there is no gain or loss, no affirmation or negation, nor is there anything extraordinary or mysterious. Since there is nothing extraordinary or mysterious, how will you understand (Te Shan's) going back and forth from east to west and west to east? Tell me, what was his meaning?

This old fellow Kuei Shan still was not taken in by that (Te

Shan); anyone but Kuei Shan would have been crushed by him. Look at how the old adept Kuei Shan meets him; he just sits there and observes the outcome. If he did not profoundly discern the 'oncoming wind,' how could he have been like this? Hsueh Tou adds the comment "Completely exposed." This is like an iron spike. In the assembly this is called an added comment: although it goes for both sides, it does not remain on either side. How will you understand his statement, "Completely exposed"? Where does the complete exposure take place? Tell me, is Te Shan completely exposed, or is it Kuei Shan who is completely exposed?

On his way out Te Shan got as far as the monastery gate, but then he said to himself, "Still, I shouldn't be so coarse." He wanted to bring out his guts, his innermost heart, in a Dharma battle with Kuei Shan; so he went back in with full ceremony to meet him. As Kuei Shan sat there, Te Shan lifted up his sitting mat and said, "Teacher!" Kuei Shan reached for his whisk; Te Shan then shouted, shook his sleeves, and left. How extraordinary!

Many in the assembly say that Kuei Shan was afraid of him. What has this got to do with it? Kuei Shan was not flustered at all. This is why it is said, "One whose wisdom surpasses a bird's can catch a bird, one whose wisdom surpasses an animal's can catch an animal, and one whose wisdom surpasses a man's can catch a man." When one is immersed in this kind of Ch'an, even if the multitude of appearances and myriad forms, heavens and hells, and all the plants, animals, and people, all were to shout at once, he still wouldn't be bothered; even if someone overthrew his meditation seat and scattered his congregation with shouts, he wouldn't give it any notice. It is as high as heaven, broad as earth. If Kuei Shan did not have the ability to cut off the tongues of everyone on earth, at that time it would have been very difficult for him to test Te Shan. If he weren't the enlightened teacher of fifteen hundred people, at this point he wouldn't have been able to explain anything. But Kuei Shan was setting strategy in motion from within his tent that would settle victory over a thousand miles.

Te Shan turned his back on the teaching hall, put on his straw sandals, and departed. Tell me, what was his meaning? You tell me, did Te Shan win or lose? Acting as he did, did Kuei

Shan win or lose? Hsueh Tou commented, "Completely exposed." Here he makes an effort and sees through the Ancients' ultimate riddle; only thus could he be so extraordinary. Hsueh Tou added "Completely exposed" twice, making a three part judgement; only then had he revealed this public case. He was like a bystander judging those two men.

Afterwards, this old fellow (Kuei Shan) was unhurried; when evening came he finally asked the head monk, "Where is that newcomer who just came?" The head monk replied, "At that time, he turned his back on the teaching hall, put on his straw sandals, and left." Kuei Shan said, "Hereafter that lad will go up to the summit of a solitary peak, build himself a grass hut, and go on scolding the Buddhas and reviling the Patriarchs." But say, what was his meaning? Old man Kuei Shan was not being good hearted; in the future Te Shan could scold the Buddhas and revile the Patriarchs, pummel the wind and beat the rain, yet he would still never get out of that cave. Te Shan's whole lifetime's methods have been seen through by this old fellow. Should we say that Kuei Shan has given him a prophecy here? Or should we say that when the marsh is wide it can hide a mountain, that reason<sup>d</sup> can subdue a leopard? Fortunately this has nothing to do with it.

Hsueh Tou knows what this public case comes down to, so he can dare to settle it for them by further saying, "He adds frost to snow." Once again he offers it up for people to see. If you do see, I'll allow that you're a fellow student of Kuei Shan, Te Shan, and Hsueh Tou. If you don't see, beware of vainly producing intellectual interpretations.

#### VERSE

*One "completely exposed"*

*\*\*The words are still in our ears. Gone.\**

*A second "completely exposed"*

*\*\*A double case.\**

*"Adding frost to snow"—(Te Shan) has had a dangerous fall.*

*\*\*The three stages are not the same. Where (did Te Shan fall)!\**

*The General of the Flying Cavalry enters the enemy camp;  
 \*\*Danger! No need to trouble to slash again at the  
 general of a defeated army. He loses his body and life. \**

*How many could regain their safety?*

*\*\*(Te Shan) gained life in the midst of death. \**

*(Te Shan) hurriedly runs past—*

*\*\*He acts like no one is around him.*

*Although you exhaust the thirty-six  
 stratagems of your supernatural powers,  
 what is the use? \**

*(But Kuei Shan) doesn't let him go.*

*\*\*The cat can subdue the leopard.*

*(Kuei Shan) pierced his nostrils. \**

*On the summit of the solitary peak, he sits among the weeds;*

*\*\*After all. To pierce his nostrils isn't out of the  
 ordinary. But why is he (Te Shan) sitting among the  
 weeds? \**

*Bah!*

*\*\*Understand! Two blades cut each other.  
 Two by two, three by three, they walk the  
 old road. Singing and clapping go together.  
 I strike! \**

#### COMMENTARY

When Hsueh Tou composed verses on one hundred public cases, with each case he burned incense and offered it up; therefore (his verses) have circulated widely throughout the land. In addition he mastered literary composition. When he had penetrated the public cases and become easily conversant with them, only then could he set his brush to paper. Why so? It is easy to distinguish dragons from snakes; it is hard to fool a patchrobed monk. Since Hsueh Tou immersed himself in this case and penetrated through it, he puts down three comments at those impenetrable, misleading places, then picks them up to make his verse.

"Adding frost to snow"—almost a dangerous fall. What is Te Shan like? He is just like Li Kuang, by innate talent a skilled

archer, whom the Emperor (Wu of Han) commissioned as the General of the Flying Cavalry (Imperial elite corps). Li Kuang penetrated deep into enemy territory, where he was captured alive by the King of the Huns. Kuang was weak from wounds; they tied him prone between two horses. Kuang played dead, but stealthily observed that there was a Hun near him riding a good mount. Kuang suddenly sprang up and leaped on the horse, throwing down the Hun rider and seizing his bow and arrows. Whipping the horse, he galloped off towards the South; drawing the bow and shooting back at the riders pursuing him, he thus made good his escape. This fellow had the ability to wrest life from the midst of death; Hsueh Tou alludes to this in the verse to make a comparison with Te Shan, who re-entered (the teaching hall) to meet (Kuei Shan), and was able to leap out again, as before.

Look at how that Ancient (Te Shan) sees all the way, speaks all the way, acts all the way, and functions all the way; he's undeniably a brave spirit. Only if you possess the ability to kill a man without blinking an eye can you then become Buddha right where you stand. Someone who can fulfill Buddhahood right where he stands naturally kills people without blinking an eye; thus he has his share of freedom and independence.

When some people these days are questioned, at first they seem to have the qualities of a patchrobed monk, but when they're pressed even slightly, their waists snap and their legs break; they come all to pieces. They totally lack the slightest continuity. That is why an Ancient said, "Continuity is indeed very difficult." Look at how Te Shan and Kuei Shan acted; were theirs stammering, halting views?

"How many could regain their safety? (Te Shan) hurriedly runs past." Te Shan shouted and left; this is just like Li Kuang's strategy after he was captured, seizing a bow to shoot and kill his guard, and making good his escape from enemy territory. Hsueh Tou's verse at this point has great effect.

Te Shan turned his back on the teaching hall, put on his straw sandals and left. Some say he gained the advantage; how far they are from realizing that this old fellow (Kuei Shan), as before, still doesn't allow (Te Shan) to appear. Hsueh Tou says, "He doesn't let him go." The same evening Kuei Shan asked the head monk, "Where is that newcomer who just came?" The head monk said, "Back then, he turned his back on the

teaching hall, put on his straw sandals and left." Kuei Shan said, "Hereafter that lad will go up to the summit of a solitary peak, build himself a grass hut, and go on scolding the Buddhas and reviling the Patriarchs." When did he ever let him go? Nevertheless, he's outstanding.

At this point, why does Hsueh Tou say, "On the summit of the solitary peak, he sits among the weeds," and then add an exclamation? Tell me, what does this come down to? Study for thirty more years!

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Someone carrying a board can only see one side, vision being obstructed by the burden.
- b. A wild fox spirit is usually an expression of blame, referring to someone who indulges in cleverness. According to an old story, someone once became a wild fox because he said that an accomplished yogi is not subject to cause and effect. However, like all 'turning words,' this expression also has a positive side, meaning one who has complete freedom of action.
- c. That is, he is leaving a trail. Some commentators explain the general metaphor by saying that when a tortoise lays eggs in the sand it covers them to hide them, but as it leaves its tail makes a track, after all revealing the whereabouts of the eggs. This expression is thus similar to the Ch'an saying about hiding the body but revealing the shadow.
- d. The alternate version of this saying is that "a cat can subdue a leopard," meaning that the weaker can subdue the stronger. Confusion arose from the similarity between the Chinese characters used for "cat" and for "reason."

# Hsueh Feng's Grain of Rice

## POINTER

Whoever would uphold the teaching of our school must be a brave spirited fellow; only with the ability to kill a man without blinking an eye can one become Buddha right where he stands. Therefore his illumination and function are simultaneous; wrapping up and opening out are equal in his preaching. Principle and phenomena are not two, and he practices both the provisional and the real. Letting go of the primary, he sets up the gate of the secondary meaning; if he were to cut off all complications straightaway, it would be impossible for late-coming students of elementary capabilities to find a resting place. It was this way yesterday; the matter couldn't be avoided. It is this way today too; faults and errors fill the skies. Still, if one is a clear eyed person, he can't be fooled one bit. Without clear eyes, lying in the mouth of a tiger, one cannot avoid losing one's body and life. As a test, I cite this; look!

## CASE

Hsueh Feng, teaching his community, said,<sup>1</sup> "Pick up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it's as big as a grain of rice.<sup>2</sup> Throw it down before you:<sup>3</sup> if, like a lacquer bucket, you don't understand,<sup>4</sup> I'll beat the drum to call everyone to look."<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. One blind man leading a crowd of blind men. It's not beyond him.
2. What technique is this? I myself have never sported devil eyes.
3. I'm afraid it can't be thrown down. What skill do you have?
4. Hsueh Feng relies on his power to deceive people. Take what's coming to you and get out!
5. Blind! The beat of the drum is for the three armies.

## COMMENTARY

Ch'ang Ch'ing asked Yun Men, "When Hsueh Feng spoke like this, was there any place where he wasn't able to appear?" Men answered, "There is." Ch'ing asked, "How so?" Men said, "One can't always be making wild fox spirit interpretations."

Yun Feng said, "Compared to above, not enough; compared to below, too much. I am making up more complications for you." He raised his staff and said, "Do you see Hsueh Feng? Where the King's rule is a little more strict, it's not permitted to plunder the open markets."

Che of Ta Kuei said, "I'll add more mud to dirt for you." He raised his staff and said, "Look! Look! Hsueh Feng has defecated right in front of you all. Come now, why don't you even recognize the smell of shit?"

Hsueh Feng, teaching his assembly, said, "Pick up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it's as big as a grain of rice." There was something extraordinary in the way this Ancient guided people and benefited beings. He was indefatigably rigorous; three times he climbed (Mount) T'ou Tzu, nine times he went to Tung Shan. Wherever he went, he would set up his lacquer tub and wooden spoon and serve as the rice steward, just for the sake of penetrating this matter.

When he arrived at Tung Shan, he served as the rice steward; one day Tung Shan asked Hsueh Feng, "What are you doing?" Hsueh Feng said, "Cleaning rice." Shan asked, "Are you washing the grit to get rid of the rice, or are you washing the rice to get rid of the grit?" Feng said, "Grit and rice are both removed at once." Shan said, "What will everybody eat?" Feng then overturned the basin. Shan said, "Your affinity lies with Te Shan," and he directed Feng to go see him.

As soon as he got there, Hsueh Feng asked, "Does this student have any share in this matter handed down from antiquity as the fundamental vehicle?" Te Shan struck him a blow and said, "What are you saying?" Because of this, Hsueh Feng had an insight.

Later Hsueh Feng was snowed in on Tortoise Mountain (in Hunan). He told Yen T'ou, "When Te Shan hit me, it was like the bottom falling out of a bucket." Yen T'ou shouted and said, "Haven't you heard it said that what comes in through the gate isn't the family treasure? You must let it flow out from your



own breast to cover heaven and earth; then you'll have some small portion of realization." Suddenly Hsueh Feng was greatly enlightened; he bowed and said to Yen T'ou, "Elder brother, today on Tortoise Mountain I have finally attained the Path."

People these days only say that the Ancient (Hsueh Feng) made something up specially to teach people of the future fixed precepts that they can rely on. To say this is just slandering that ancient master; this is called "spilling Buddha's blood." The Ancients weren't like people today with their spurious shallow talk; otherwise, how could they have used a single word or half a phrase for a whole lifetime? Therefore, when it came to supporting the teaching of the school and continuing the life of the Buddhas, they would spit out a word or half a phrase which would spontaneously cut off the tongues of everyone on earth. There's no place for you to produce a train of thought, to make intellectual interpretations, or to grapple with principles. See how Hsueh Feng taught his community; since he had seen adepts, he had the hammer and tongs of an adept. Whenever he utters a word or half a phrase, he's not making his livelihood within the ghost caves of mental activity, ideational consciousness and calculating thought. He just surpasses the multitudes and stands out from the crowd; he settles past and present and leaves no room for uncertainty. His actions were all like this.

One day Hsueh Feng said to his community, "On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake; all of you should take a good look at it." Thereupon Wayfarer Leng (Ch'ang Ch'ing) came forward from the assembly and said, "If so, then there are a lot of people in this hall today who lose their bodies and lives."

On another occasion Hsueh Feng said, "The whole great earth is the single eye of a monk; where will you people go to defecate?" Another time he said, "I have met with you at Wang Chou Pavilion; I have also met with you in the Black Rock Range, and I have also met with you in front of the monks' hall." At the time Pao Fu asked E Hu, "Leaving aside 'in front of the monks' hall,' what about the meetings at Wang Chou Pavilion and Black Rock Range?" E Hu hurried back to his room. Hsueh Feng was always bringing up this kind of talk to instruct his community.

As for "Pick up the whole great earth in your fingers, and it's

as big as a grain of rice"—tell me, at this juncture, can you figure it out by means of intellectual discrimination? Here you must smash through the net, at once abandon gain and loss, affirmation and negation, to be completely free and at ease; you naturally pass through his snare, and then you will see what he's doing. Tell me, where is Hsueh Feng's meaning?

People often make up intellectual interpretations and say, "Mind is the master of myriad things; the whole great earth is all at once in my hand." Fortunately, this has no connection. Here you must be a true and genuine fellow, who penetrates the bone through to the marrow, and sees all the way through as soon as he hears it brought up, yet without falling into emotional considerations or conceptual thinking. If you are a genuine foot-traveling patchrobed monk, you will see that in acting this way, Hsueh Feng was already indulging to help others.

Look at Hsueh Tou's verse, which says,

#### VERSE

*An ox head disappears,*

*\*\*Like a flash of lightening.*

*You've already stumbled past it. \**

*A horse head emerges.*

*\*\*Like sparks struck from flint. \**

*In the mirror of Ts'ao Ch'i,<sup>a</sup> absolutely no dust.*

*\*\*Come smash the mirror and I will meet with  
you; you must first smash it. \**

*He beats the drum for you to come look, but you don't see:*

*\*\*He pierces your eyes. Don't take it lightly. In the  
lacquer bucket, where is it hard to see? \**

*When spring arrives, for whom do the hundred flowers bloom?*

*\*\*Things don't overlap. What a mess! He sticks his head  
out from within a cave of tangled vines. \**

#### COMMENTARY

Naturally Hsueh Tou sees that other Ancient; he only needs to go to his lifeline, and in one spurt produces a verse for him.

"An ox head disappears, a horse head emerges." Tell me, what is he saying? If you see all the way through to the bottom, it is like eating gruel early in the morning and eating rice at midday—just this ordinary. Out of compassion, Hsueh Tou shatters (everything) with one hammer blow at the outset, and settles (everything) with a single phrase. He is just undeniably solitary and steep, like a flint-struck spark or a flash of lightning. He doesn't reveal his sword point; there's no place for you to linger over. Tell me, can you search it out in your intellectual faculty? These first two lines have said it all.

In the third line, instead Hsueh Tou opens a pathway and displays a little bit of formal style—already he has fallen into the weeds. If you produce words on top of words, phrases on top of phrases, ideas on top of ideas, making up explanations and interpretations, you will not only get me bogged down, but you'll also turn your backs on Hsueh Tou. Although old man Hsueh Tou's verse is this way, his intention is not like this. He has never made up principles to bind people.

"In the mirror of Ts'ao Ch'i, absolutely no dust." Quite a few people say that a stilled mind is the mirror itself. Fortunately, this has nothing to do with it; if you're only concerned with judging and comparing principles, what end will there be to it? Hsueh Tou has spoken clearly; it's just that people do not see. Therefore Hsueh Tou, being such a dotard, says in verse, "He beats the drum for you to come look, but you don't see." Do ignorant people see? He says more to you: "When spring arrives, for whom do the hundred flowers bloom?" One could say he's opening the doors and windows, throwing them wide open all at once for you. When spring comes, in the hidden valleys and wild ravines, in places where there are no people, a hundred flowers burst forth in profusion. Tell me, who else do they bloom for?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Ts'ao Ch'i was the abode of the great Sixth Patriarch of Chinese Ch'an, Hui Neng (also known as 'workman Lu'), and is used to refer to him, as well as to his inspiration and lineage. According to tradition, when the Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen wanted to appoint a successor, he told his students to each compose a verse expressing his understanding. All deferred to the senior disciple, Shen Hsiu, a

man of great learning and accomplishment in discipline and meditation. Shen Hsiu wrote,

*The body is the tree of enlightenment,  
The mind like a bright mirror-stand;  
Time and again polish it diligently,  
Do not let there be any dust.*

Hui Neng, however, then a workman in the temple, composed the following verse:

*Enlightenment is basically not a tree,  
And the mind-mirror not a stand;  
Originally there is not a single thing—  
What is the use of wiping away dust?*

An alternate version has the last line, "Where is there any dust?"  
Hung Jen accepted Hui Neng as his successor.

# Yun Men's Every Day is a Good Day

## CASE

Yun Men said, "I don't ask you about before the fifteenth day;<sup>1</sup> try to say something about after the fifteenth day."<sup>2</sup>

Yun Men himself answered for everyone, "Every day is a good day."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. Half south of the river, half north of the river. We don't keep old calendar dates here.
2. Inevitably it will go from dawn to sunset; just don't say that the next day is the sixteenth. Days and months seem to flow by.
3. He's gathered it up. Though the frog jumps, he can't get out of the basket. Whose house has no bright moon and pure wind? But do you know it? The sea god knows its value, he doesn't know its price.

## COMMENTARY

Yun Men first called on Mu Chou. Mu Chou spun devices that turned like lightning, so it was difficult to approach and linger. Whenever he received someone, he would grab him as soon as he crossed the threshold and say, "Speak! Speak!" If he couldn't attempt a reply, he would push him out, saying, "Antique drill turning in a rut!"

When Yun Men went to see Mu Chou, on the third time, as soon as he knocked on the door, Mu Chou said, "Who's there?" Yun Men answered, "[Me,] Wen Yen."<sup>a</sup> As soon as (Mu Chou) opened the door a little, (Yun Men) immediately bounded in; Mu Chou held him fast and said, "Speak! Speak!" Yun Men

hesitated, and was pushed out; he still had one foot inside when Mu Chou slammed the door, breaking Yun Men's leg. As Yun Men cried out in pain, he was suddenly greatly enlightened. Subsequently, the trend of his words in dealing with people, his whole style, emerged from Mu Chou. After this, Yun Men stayed for three years in the home of the ministry president Ch'en Ts'ao.<sup>b</sup>

Mu Chou directed Yun Men to go to Hsueh Feng; when he arrived there, he came forth from the assembly and said, "What is Buddha?" Hsueh Feng said, "Don't talk in your sleep." Yun Men then bowed. He dwelt there for three years. One day Hsueh Feng asked him, "What is your perception?" Yun Men said, "My view doesn't differ in the slightest from that of all the sages since antiquity."

For twenty years Ling Shu did not appoint a head monk. He used to say, "My head monk is born," and "My head monk is tending oxen," and he would say, "My head monk is traveling on foot." Suddenly one day he ordered the bell to be struck (for everyone to assemble) to receive the head monk at the gate. The congregation was dubious about this, but Yun Men actually arrived. Ling Shu immediately invited him into the head monk's quarters to unpack his bundle. People called Ling Shu the Knowing Sage Ch'an Master, since he knew of all past and future events in advance.

Once King Liu, the Lord of Kuang (-tung), was going to mobilize his army; he intended to go to the monastery personally to ask the master (Ling Shu) to determine whether conditions were auspicious or not. Ling Shu, knowing of this beforehand, sat down and peacefully passed away. The Lord of Kuang said angrily, "Since when was the master sick?" The attendant answered, "The master hadn't been sick. He had just entrusted a box (to me), which he ordered me to present to your majesty when you arrived." The Lord of Kuang opened the box and took out a card which said, "The Eye of Humans and Gods (a living Buddha) is the head monk in the hall." Having understood Ling Shu's inner meaning, the Lord of Kuang thereupon dismissed his soldiers and invited Yun Men to appear in the world at Ling Shu Monastery. Only later did he dwell at Yun Men.

As the master was expounding the Dharma, the royal attendant Ju posed a question; "Is the fruit of Ling Shu ('Spiritual

Tree') ripe yet, or not?" Yun Men said, "When have you ever heard it said that it was unripe?"

One day King Liu summoned the master to spend the summer in the palace. Together with several other venerable abbots, he was to receive the questions of the courtiers and expound the Dharma. Only one man, the master Yun Men, did not speak, and there was no one on familiar terms with him. One of the palace functionaries wrote a verse and posted it in the Green Jade Hall:

*Cultivation of the great wisdom—only that is  
Ch'an;  
Silence, not clamor, is in order for the Ch'an school.  
Ten thousand kinds of clever talk—how can they  
be as good as reality?  
They lose to Yun Men's total not speaking.*

Yun Men usually liked to teach three word Ch'an:<sup>c</sup> observing, "Reflect!" "Ha!" He also taught one word Ch'an: a monk asked, "When you kill your father and mother, you repent before the Buddha; when you kill the Buddha and Patriarchs, where do you turn to repent?" Yun Men said, "Exposed." Again a monk asked, "What is the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma?" Yun Men said, "Universal." It just doesn't allow any attempts to explain. In ordinary situations, even, Yun Men would still revile people. When he uttered a phrase, it was like an iron spike.

Later Yun Men produced the Four Sages: Tung Shan Shou Ch'u, Chih Men Shih Kuan, Te Shan Yuan Mi, and Hsiang Lin Teng Yuan. They all were great masters of the school. Hsiang Lin served as Yun Men's attendant for eighteen years; whenever Yun Men dealt with him, he would just call out, "Attendant Yuan!" Yuan would answer, "Yes?" Yun Men would say, "What is it?" It went on like this for eighteen years, when one day Hsiang Lin finally awakened. Yun Men told him, "From now on I won't call you any more."

In Yun Men's usual dealings with people, he would often use the methods of Mu Chou; though it was hard to approach him, he had the hammer and tongs, to pull out nails and wrench out pegs. Hsueh Tou said of him, "I like the fresh devices of Shao Yang;<sup>d</sup> he spent his life pulling out nails and pegs for people."

Yun Men set down a question to instruct his community, "I

don't ask you about before the fifteenth day; try to say something about after the fifteenth day." He cuts off the thousand distinctions, and doesn't let either ordinary or holy pass. He himself answered for everyone, "Every day is a good day." The words "before the fifteenth day" already cut off the thousand distinctions; the words "after the fifteenth day" also cut off the thousand distinctions. The fact is that Yun Men did not say that the next day is the sixteenth day. People coming after him merely followed his words to produce interpretations; but what relevance has this? Yun Men established a protean style; he surely had a way to benefit people. Having spoken some words, he then answered himself in everyone's behalf: "Every day is a good day." These words pervade past and present, from before until after, and settle everything at once.

I too am following his words to produce interpretations when I talk like this. Killing others is not as good as killing yourself. As soon as you make a principle, you fall into a pit. Three phrases are inherent in every one phrase of Yun Men; since the source inspiration of his family is like this, when Yun Men utters a phrase, it must be returned to the source. Anything but this will always be phony. The affair has no multitude of arguments and propositions, though those who have not yet penetrated want (me as commentator) to go on like this. If you do penetrate, then you will immediately see the essential meaning of the Ancient.

Take a look at the complications Hsueh Tou creates:

#### VERSE

*He throws away one,*

*\*\*Seven openings, eight holes.*

*Where has it gone? He lets up  
a little. \**

*Picks up seven.*

*\*\*He can't pick them up, yet  
he doesn't let them go. \**

*Above, below, and in the four directions, there is no comparison.*

*\*\*What's it like? Above is the sky, below is the earth.*



*East, west, south, north; what comparison is there?  
Nevertheless, the staff is in my hand. \**

*Placidly walking along, he treads down the sound of the flowing stream;*

*\*\*Don't ask what's right under your feet. It's difficult to investigate it thoroughly. He's gone into the nest of entangling vines. \**

*His relaxed gaze descries the tracks of flying birds.*

*\*\*In the eye, there is no such happening. A wild fox spirit view; as before, he's just inside the same old den. \**

*The grasses grow thick,*

*\*\*He pulls the arrow out of the back of his head. What's going on here?  
He is fallen into equanimity. \**

*The mists overhang.*

*\*\*He hasn't come out of this nest yet.  
Beneath his feet clouds arise. \**

*'Round Subhuti's cliff, the flowers make a mess;*

*\*\*Where is he! The stupid fellow! He's been completely exposed. \**

*I snap my fingers;° how lamentable is Shunyata!*

*\*\*The four quarters and eight directions,  
the whole cosmos; inside Shunyata's nostrils,  
try to say something. Where is (Shunyata)! \**

*Don't make a move!*

*\*\*How come your previous words?  
When you move, then what! \**

*If you move, thirty blows!*

*\*\*Take what's coming to you  
and get out. I strike! \**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou's eulogies of the Ancients were always accomplished like this: at first he takes the jewel sword of the Diamond King and brings it down at once; then afterwards he

reveals a little bit of formal style. Although it's like this, ultimately there are not two understandings.

"He throws away one, picks up seven." People often make an understanding based on the numbers and say, "'He throws away one' refers to 'before the fifteenth day'." Having abruptly put down two lines and sealed it up, Hsueh Tou then instead reveals it to let people see; "He throws away one, picks up seven." You must avoid turning to the words for your subsistence. Why? What moisture is there in unleavened bread? People often fall back into conceptual consciousness. You must obtain your understanding before the words arise; then the great function will become manifest and you will naturally see it.

This is why after old man Shakyamuni had attained the Path in the land of Magadha, he spent three weeks contemplating this matter: "The nature of all things being quiescent extinction cannot be conveyed by words; I would rather not preach the Dharma, but quickly enter nirvana." When he got to this point, even Shakyamuni couldn't find any way to open his mouth. But by virtue of his power of skill in technique, after he had preached to the five mendicants, he went to three hundred and sixty assemblies and expounded the teachings for his age. All these were just expedients. For this reason he had taken off his bejewelled regal garments and put on rough dirty clothing. He could not but turn towards the shallows within the gate of the secondary meaning in order to lead in his various disciples. If we had him face upwards and bring it all up at once, there would hardly be anyone in the whole world (who could understand).

But tell me, what is the supreme word? At this point Hsueh Tou reveals a little of the meaning to let people see. Just don't see that there are any buddhas above, don't see that there are sentient beings below; don't see that there are mountains, rivers, and earth without, and don't see that there are seeing, hearing, discernment, or knowledge within: then you will be like one who has died the great death and then returned to life. With long and short, good and evil, fused into one whole, though you bring them up one by one, you'll no longer see them as different. After that, you'll be able to function responsively without losing balance. Then you will see the meaning of his saying, "He throws away one, picks up seven; above,

below, and in the four directions, there is no comparison." If you pass through at these lines, then and there above, below, and in the four directions, there is no comparison. The myriad forms and multitude of appearances—plants, animals, and people—everything everywhere completely manifests the way of your own house. Thus it was said,

*Within myriad forms, only one body is revealed;  
Only when one is sure for himself will he then be  
near.*

*In past years I mistakenly turned to the road to  
search;*

*Now I look upon it like ice within fire.*

"In the heavens and on earth, I alone am the honored one." Many people pursue the branches and don't seek the root. First get the root right, then naturally when the wind blows the grass bends down, naturally where water flows a stream forms.

"Placidly walking along, he treads down the sound of the flowing stream." As he goes along placidly, he can tread down and cut off even the roar of a vast swelling torrent. "His relaxed gaze describes the tracks of flying birds." Even if it's the tracks of flying birds, allow the eye one look, and it is like tracing them out. When you get here, you will not consider it difficult to blow out the fires under the cauldrons of hell, or to shatter sword forests and knife mountains with a shout.

Because of his compassion, at this point Hsueh Tou feared that people would settle down within the realm of unconcern, so he went on to say, "The grasses grow thick, the mists overhang." But tell me, whose world is this? Can it be called "Every day is a good day"? Fortunately, there's no connection. In fact, "Placidly walking along, he treads down the sound of the flowing stream" isn't it; "His relaxed gaze describes the tracks of flying birds" isn't it either; nor is "The grasses grow thick," nor "The mists overhang." But even something entirely different would just be "'Round Subhuti's cliff, the flowers make a mess." It is still necessary to turn beyond That Side. Haven't you read how as Subhuti was sitting in silent meditation in a cliffside cave, the gods showered down flowers to praise him. The venerable Subhuti said, "Flowers are showering down from the sky in praise; whose doing is this?" A god said, "I am Indra, king of the gods." Venerable Subhuti asked, "Why are

you offering praise?" Indra said, "I esteem the Venerable One's skill in expounding the transcendence of wisdom." Subhuti said, "I have never spoken a single word about wisdom; why are you offering praise?" Indra said, "You have never spoken and I have never heard. No speaking, no hearing—this is true wisdom." And again he caused the earth to tremble, and showered down flowers.

Hsueh Tou once made up another verse about this:

*The rain has passed, the clouds are shrinking, dawn  
has halfway broken through;  
The multiple peaks are like a drawing of blue-green  
rocky crags.  
Subhuti did not know how to sit upon a cliff;  
He brought on the heavenly flowers and the shaking  
of the earth.*

When the king of gods is shaking the earth and raining down flowers, at this point where else will you go to hide? Hsueh Tou also said,

*I fear Subhuti won't be able to escape him;  
Even beyond the cosmos all is filled to the brim.  
What end will he know to his frantic turmoil?  
From all sides the pure wind tugs at his clothes.*

Though you be clean and naked, bare and purified, totally without fault or worry, this is still not the ultimate. In the end though, what is? Look carefully at this quote; "I snap my fingers; how lamentable is Shunyata!" The Sanskrit word "Shunyata" in our language means the spirit of emptiness. Empty space is her body; she has no physical body to be conscious of contact. When the Buddha's brilliance shines forth, then she manifests her body. When you get to be like Shunyata, then Hsueh Tou will rightly snap his fingers in lament.

Again Hsueh Tou says, "Don't make a move!" What's it like when you move? (Like) sleeping with your eyes open under the bright sun in the blue sky.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Wen Yen was Yun Men's personal initiatory name: see the biographical supplement.

- b. Ch'en Ts'ao was an enlightened disciple of Mu Chou and lived in the same area.
- c. When Yun Men encountered someone, he would look at him and say, "Reflect!" and "Ha!" (a laugh of derision or scorn); later the word describing Yun Men's action was included by a compiler as one of the "three words" he is supposed to have used.
- d. Shao Yang is the name of the region where Yun Men monastery was located, and so according to the custom of referring to Ch'an masters by the name of their abode, this is another name for Yun Men.
- e. Snapping the fingers is used for alerting, warning, and for warding off filth or taboo. Abiding in subjective emptiness is referred to as intoxication in Ch'an, considered onesided, incomplete, and narrow-minded; hence it is taboo.

# Hui Ch'ao Asks about Buddha

## POINTER

The thousand sages have not transmitted the single word before sound; if you have never seen it personally, it's as if it were worlds away. Even if you discern it before sound and cut off the tongues of everyone in the world, you're still not a sharp fellow. Therefore it is said, "The sky can't cover it; the earth can't support it; empty space can't contain it; sun and moon can't illumine it." Where there is no Buddha and you alone are called the Honored One, for the first time you've amounted to something. Otherwise, if you are not yet this way, penetrate through on the tip of a hair and release the great shining illumination; then in all directions you will be independent and free in the midst of phenomena; whatever you pick up, there is nothing that's not it. But tell me, what is attained that is so extraordinary?

Does everyone understand? No one knows about the sweating horses of the past; they only want to emphasize the achievement that crowns the age. Leaving this matter aside for the moment, what about Hsueh Tou's public case? Look into what's written below.

## CASE

A monk (named Hui Ch'ao) asked Fa Yen,<sup>1</sup> "Hui Ch'ao asks the Teacher, what is Buddha?"<sup>2</sup>

Fa Yen said, "You are Hui Ch'ao."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. What is he saying? He's wearing stocks, giving evidence of his crime.
2. What is he saying? His eyeballs pop out.

3. He comes out with this according to his pattern. Iron scrap stuffing. He goes right up to him and takes him.

## COMMENTARY

Ch'an Master Fa Yen had this ability of breaking in and crashing out at the same time,<sup>a</sup> and also the use of this ability; thus he could answer like this. This is what is called passing beyond sound and form, achieving the great freedom, letting go or taking back as the occasion requires, where killing or bringing life rests with oneself. He is undeniably extraordinary. Nevertheless, people from all over who deliberate over this public case are many, and those who make intellectual interpretations to understand it are not few. They do not realize that whenever the Ancients handed down a word or half a phrase, it was like sparks struck from flint, like a flash of lightning, directly opening up a single straight path.

People of later times just went to the words to make up interpretations. Some say, "Hui Ch'ao is himself Buddha; that is why Fa Yen answered as he did." Some say, "It's much like riding an ox searching for an ox." Some say "The asking is it." What relevance has any of this? If you go on understanding in this fashion, not only do you turn against yourself, but you seriously demean that man of old.

If you want to see the whole of (Fa Yen's) device, you must be a fellow who doesn't turn his head when struck, a fellow with teeth like sword trees and a mouth like a blood bowl, who knows outside the words what they refer to; then you will have a small portion of realization. If one by one they make intellectual interpretations, everyone on earth would be an exterminator of the Buddha's race. As for Ch'an traveller Hui Ch'ao's awakening here, he was constantly engrossed in penetrating investigation; therefore under the impact of one word, it was as if the bottom fell out of his bucket.

It's like Superintendent Tse: he had been staying in Fa Yen's congregation, but had never asked to enter (Fa Yen's) room (for special instruction). One day Fa Yen asked him, "Why haven't you come to enter my room?" Tse replied, "Didn't you know, Teacher, when I was at Ch'ing Lin's place, I had an entry." Fa Yen said, "Try to recall it for me." Tse said, "I asked, 'What is

Buddha?' Lin said, 'The Fire God comes looking for fire.'" Fa Yen said, "Good words, but I'm afraid you misunderstood. Can you say something more for me?" Tse said, "The Fire God is in the province of fire; he is seeking fire with fire. Likewise, I am Buddha, yet I went on searching for Buddha." Fa Yen said, "Sure enough, the Superintendent has misunderstood." Containing his anger, Tse left the monastery and went off across the river. Fa Yen said, "This man can be saved if he comes back; if he doesn't return, he can't be saved." Out on the road, Tse thought to himself, "He is the teacher of five hundred people; how could he deceive me?" So he turned back and again called on Fa Yen, who told him, "Just ask me and I'll answer you." Thereupon Tse asked, "What is Buddha?" Fa Yen said, "The Fire God comes looking for fire." At these words Tse was greatly enlightened.

These days there are those who just put a glare in their eyes and interpret that as understanding. As it is said, "Since this has no wounds, don't wound it."<sup>b</sup> With this kind of public case, those who have practiced for a long time know where it comes down as soon as it's brought up. In the Fa Yen succession this is called "arrowpoints meeting."<sup>c</sup> They don't employ the five positions of prince and minister,<sup>d</sup> or the four propositions;<sup>e</sup> they simply talk of arrowpoints meeting. The style of Fa Yen's family is like this; one word falls and you see and immediately directly penetrate. But if you ponder over the words, to the end you will search without finding.

Fa Yen appeared in the world and had a congregation of five hundred. At this time the Buddha Dharma flourished greatly. At this time the (future) National Teacher Te Shao had spent a long time with Su Shan, and he considered himself to have attained Su Shan's meaning. So he had gathered together the writings made by Su Shan in the course of his lifetime, and a portrait of him (to symbolize his succession to Su Shan), and led a band of followers travelling on foot. When they got to Fa Yen's community, he himself did not go to enter the Master's room, but just ordered his followers to go along with the others to enter the room.

One day when Fa Yen had ascended his seat, there was a monk who asked, "What is one drop from the fount of Ts'ao Ch'i?" Fa Yen said, "It's one drop from the fount of Ts'ao Ch'i." The monk was dumbfounded and withdrew; Shao, who was in



the assembly, was suddenly greatly enlightened when he heard this. Later he appeared in the world as one of Fa Yen's successors. Shao had a verse which he presented, saying,

*The summit of the peak of the mystic crossing  
Is not the human world;  
Outside the mind there are no things—  
Blue mountains fill the eyes.*

Fa Yen gave his seal of approval and said, "This one verse alone can perpetuate my school. In the future kings and lords will honor you. I am not equal to you."

Look at those Ancients; when they awaken like this, what truth is this? It won't do just to have me tell you; you yourself must tune your spirit all day long. If you can attain fulfillment the way these people did, then someday you will let down your hand for people in the crossroads, and won't consider it a difficult thing, either.

Thus, when the monk asked Fa Yen, "What is Buddha?" Fa Yen said, "You are Hui Ch'ao." Is there any contradiction here? Haven't you read what Yun Men said—"When it is brought up, if you don't take heed, then you'll miss it; if you try to assess it by thinking, in what aeon will you awaken?" Hsueh Tou subsequently versified it with unmistakable clarity. I'll bring it up: Look!

#### VERSE

*In the river country the spring wind isn't blowing;  
\*\*Where in the world do you find this scene?  
The pattern is already showing.\**

*Deep within the flowers partridges are calling.  
\*\*What's the use of this chatter! He is  
blown by the wind into a different tune.  
How can there be such a thing!\**

*At the three-tiered Dragon Gate, where the waves are high,  
fish become dragons,  
\*\*Traverse this one road. Don't fool the great congregation.  
Tread upon the dragon's head.\**

*Yet fools still go on scooping out the evening pond water.*

*\*\*Leaning on a fence, groping along a wall;<sup>i</sup> next to the gate, standing by the door;<sup>g</sup> what use is this for a patch-robed monk? This is standing by a stump waiting for a rabbit.<sup>h</sup>\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou is an adept: where the Ancients are hard to gnaw on and hard to chew, hard to penetrate and hard to see, an impenetrable riddle, he produces it in verse to let people see. He is indeed extraordinary. Hsueh Tou knew Fa Yen's key device, and he also knew where Hui Ch'ao was at. Still, he feared that people in the future would turn to Fa Yen's words and mistakenly conceive an understanding, so he came out with this verse.

This monk's asking like this, Fa Yen's answering like this—this is "In the river country the spring wind isn't blowing; deep within the flowers partridges are calling." These two lines are just one line. But say, where is Hsueh Tou's meaning?

In Kiangsi and Chiangnan many people make a two-part interpretation; they say that "In the river country the spring wind isn't blowing" is used to versify "You are Hui Ch'ao." (They say that) this scene—even if the spring wind doesn't blow in the river country, still "deep within the flowers partridges are calling"—is used to compare the endless haggling over these words everywhere to the partridges crying deep in the flowers. But what relevance has this? How far they are from knowing that these two lines of Hsueh Tou's are but a single line. Do you want to have no seam or gap? Clearly I tell you, his speech is to the point, his words are to the point; they cover heaven and earth.

(Hui Ch'ao) asked, "What is Buddha?" Fa Yen answered, "You are Hui Ch'ao." Hsueh Tou says, "In the river country the spring wind isn't blowing; deep within the flowers partridges call." If you can make the grade here, you will be able to walk alone through the red skies; if you make intellectual interpretations, (you'll go on through) past, present, and future lives for sixty aeons.

Hsueh Tou is extremely compassionate in the third and

fourth lines; all at once he explains completely for people. Ch'an Master Ch'ao's great awakening is likened to fish becoming dragons where the waves are high at the three-tiered Dragon Gate, while fools still go on dragging through evening pond water. (The Dragon Gate is a gorge through which the Yellow River passes at the border of Shensi and Shansi; according to tradition,) King Yu cut it (through the mountains) forming a three-level (passage for the river). Nowadays, on the third day of the third month, when the peach blossoms bloom, and heaven and earth are ready, if there is a fish that can get through the Dragon Gate, horns sprout on his head, he raises his bristling tail, catches hold of a cloud, and flies away. Those who cannot leap through fail and fall back.<sup>1</sup> Fools who gnaw on the words are like scooping out the evening pond water looking for fish; how little they realize that the fish have already turned into dragons! Old Master Tuan had a verse which said,

*A copper of bright money  
Buys a fried cake;  
He gobbles it down into his belly,  
And from then on no longer feels hunger.*

This verse is very good, only it's too crude. Hsueh Tou's verse is very clever, and he doesn't cut his hand on its sharp point.

In the old days Librarian Ch'ing liked to ask people, "What is 'Fish turn into dragons at three-tiered Dragon Gate where the waves are high?'" For me, it's not necessary, but now I'm asking you: having turned into a dragon, where is he now?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Breaking in and crashing out at the same time symbolizes the action of the teacher and student encounter: the student is likened to a chick still inside the shell of his ego, trying to crash its way out, while the teacher, as the 'parent,' breaks through from the outside to help the chick out. See the sixteenth case.
- b. This saying is taken from the *Vimalakirtinirdesa* scripture, in which context it should be read, "Since they have no wounds, don't wound them," meaning that the lesser vehicle of revulsion should not be taught to those who have the capacity for the greater vehicle of tolerance. We have not used "they" because of

the preceding sentence in the context; "they" would cause confusion here. Yuan Wu's intent seems to be don't impute any flaw to the flawless Buddha-essence by intellectual, emotional interpretations. Tenkei Denson says, "Fa Yen's answer 'You're Hui Ch'ao,' breaking in and crashing out at the same time, has no gap or flaw, so don't you people ruin it with intellectual judgements."

- c. This represents question and answer meeting, like two arrows meeting head on in midair, stopping each other at once; the meeting of minds.
- d. This was an illustrative device of the Ts'ao-Tung tradition of Ch'an: the Prince, or Lord, symbolizes emptiness, while the Minister, or Vassal, symbolizes the world of matter, or form. The five positions are: minister turning towards prince (emptiness within matter), prince looking at minister (matter within emptiness), prince alone (emptiness as such), minister alone (matter as such), and prince and minister in harmony (simultaneous inter-identification of emptiness and matter).
- e. This was a device of the Lin Chi tradition of Ch'an: the four propositions involve conceding or taking away person and/or environment, taking away the person but not the environment, taking away the environment but not the person, taking away both, and leaving both. See the appendix, "Traditional Teaching Devices."
- f. This depicts the blind groping their way along.
- g. This means not yet having entered.
- h. This refers to a story of a man who saw a running rabbit happen to collide with a tree stump and die; the man took the rabbit for food, and, thinking to obtain another rabbit; he foolishly stood by the stump, waiting for it to 'catch' another rabbit for him. This is used to describe those who cling to words or images, thinking them to be a source of enlightenment.
- i. This simile of passing through the Dragon Gate was also used to refer to the Chinese civil service examinations; those who passed could become government officials.

## Ts'ui Yen's Eyebrows

## POINTER

If you understand, you can make use of it on the road, like a dragon reaching the water, like a tiger in the mountains. If you don't understand, then the worldly truth will prevail, and you will be like a ram caught in a fence, like (a fool) watching over a stump waiting for a rabbit. Sometimes a single phrase is like a lion crouching on the ground; sometimes a phrase is like the Diamond King's jewel sword. Sometimes a phrase cuts off the tongues of everyone on earth, and sometimes a phrase follows the waves and pursues the currents.

If you make use of it on the road, when you meet with a man of knowledge you distinguish what's appropriate to the occasion, you know what's right and what's wrong, and together you witness each other's illumination. Where the worldly truth prevails, one who has the single eye can cut off everything in the ten directions and stand like a mile high wall. Therefore it is said, "When the great function appears it does not keep to any fixed standards." Sometimes we take a blade of grass and use it as the sixteen foot golden body (of Buddha); sometimes we take the sixteen foot golden body and use it as a blade of grass. But tell me, what principle does this depend upon? Do you really know? To test, I cite this; Look!

## CASE

At the end of the summer retreat Ts'ui Yen said to the community, "All summer long I've been talking to you, brothers;<sup>1</sup> look and see if my eyebrows are still there."<sup>2.a</sup>

Pao Fu said, "The thief's heart is cowardly."<sup>3</sup>

Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Grown."<sup>4</sup>

Yun Men said, "A barrier."<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. If you open your mouth, how can you know it to be so?
2. All he's achieved is that his eyes have fallen out too, along with his nostrils, which he's already lost. He enters hell fast as an arrow shot.
3. Obviously. This is a thief recognizing a thief.
4. His tongue falls to the ground; he adds error to error. After all.
5. Where is there to run to? No patchrobed monk in the world can leap out. He's defeated.

## COMMENTARY

The Ancients had morning study and evening inquiry; at the end of the summer retreat Ts'ui Yen turned around and spoke to the community like this, and he was undeniably solitary and steep—nothing could stop him from startling the heavens and shaking the earth. But tell me, in the whole great treasury of teachings, in the five thousand and forty-eight volumes of the canon, whether they talk of mind or nature, whether they preach the sudden or the gradual, has there ever been this happening? They're all this kind of occasion, but among them Ts'ui Yen is outstanding. Look at the way he talks; tell me, where is his true meaning?

When the Ancients let down a hook, it was never an empty manoeuvre; they invariably had some truth to benefit people. Many people misunderstand and say, "Under the bright sun in the blue sky, Ts'ui Yen spoke aimless talk producing concern where there was none; at the end of the summer he spoke of his own faults and examined himself first to avoid others criticizing him." Fortunately this has nothing to do with it. Such views are called exterminators of the Buddha's race. The appearance in the world of the successive generations of teaching masters would have been entirely without benefit if they hadn't reached down to instruct people. What would have been the purpose? When you get here, if you can see all the way through, then you will know that the Ancients had the method to drive off a plowman's ox and to snatch away a hungry man's food.

People today, when questioned, immediately turn to the words to chew on them, making a living on Ts'ui Yen's eyebrows. Look at how the people of his house naturally know where he is operating: through a thousand changes and ten thousand transformations, amidst impenetrable complications, everywhere they have ways to show themselves; hence they are able to chime in with him like this in response. If there is nothing extraordinary about these words of Ts'ui Yen's, why then would these three men, Yun Men, Pao Fu, and Ch'ang Ch'ing, have replied to him so profusely?

Pao Fu said, "The thief's heart is cowardly." How much intellectual interpretation these words have provoked lately! But say, what about Pao Fu's meaning? You must avoid searching for that Ancient in his words. If you give rise to feelings and arouse your thoughts, then he'll snatch your eyeballs away. Above all, people don't realize that when Pao Fu utters one turning word, he cuts off Ts'ui Yen's footsteps.

Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Grown." Many people say, "Ch'ang Ch'ing turns along following Ts'ui Yen's footsteps, therefore he says (that Ts'ui Yen's eyebrows have) grown." But this has nothing to do with it. They don't know that Ch'ang Ch'ing brings out his own view when he says, "Grown." Each has a place to appear in person, but I ask you, where is the growth?

It's just like being face to face with an adept brandishing the Diamond King's jewel sword. If you can smash the views of the ordinary current and cut off gain and loss, affirmation and negation, then you will see where Ch'ang Ch'ing responded to Ts'ui Yen.

Yun Men said, "A barrier." This is undeniably outstanding, but hard to penetrate. The great master Yun Men often taught people with one word Ch'an, though in the one word the three phrases were always present. Look how this Ancient replied to suit the occasion; naturally he was far removed from the people of this day and age. This then is the way to utter a phrase. Although Yun Men spoke like this, his meaning is definitely not here. Since the meaning is not here, tell me, where is it? If you are a clear eyed man with the ability to illumine heaven and earth, just be crystal clear in every respect. For his single word "barrier" and the words of the other three, Hsueh Tou has strung them together in one verse:

## VERSE

*Ts'ui Yen teaches the followers;*

*\*\*The old thief! He's corrupting  
other people's children.\**

*For a thousand ages, there is no reply.*

*\*\*In a thousand or ten thousand,  
still there's one or a half. He  
divides a tally.\**

*The word "barrier" answers him back;*

*\*\*Didn't you believe what I said?  
He is undeniably extraordinary.  
Only if you're such a person can  
you understand such talk.\**

*He loses his money and suffers punishment.<sup>b</sup>*

*\*\*He gulps down his breath and swallows  
his voice. Hsueh Tou too has done quite  
a bit of this. I'd strike while he's still  
talking.\**

*Decrepit old Pao Fu—*

*\*\*You're fellow travelers on  
the same path; and still you  
act this way. Two, three.\**

*Censure or praise are impossible to apply.*

*\*\*Letting go, holding still. Who is born  
the same and dies the same! Don't slander  
him. Luckily there's no connection.\**

*Talkative Ts'ui Yen*

*\*\*Wild fox spirit!  
Shut your mouth!\**

*Is clearly a thief.*

*\*\*So it may be said. He's been caught!\**

*The clear jewel has no flaws;*

*\*\*Can you tell? No one in the world knows its price.\**

*Who can distinguish true from false?*

*\*\*Many are just false. I myself have never had the eye  
(for this); (what about) the blue-eyed foreign monk  
(Bodhidharma)!\**



*Ch'ang Ch'ing knows him well;*

*\*\*This is a spirit recognizing a spirit; only  
he could do this. Yet he still hasn't gotten  
(the other) half.\**

*His eyebrows are grown.*

*\*\*Where! From head to foot there isn't a single blade of  
grass.\**

#### COMMENTARY

How could Hsueh Tou be called a Good Friend if he hadn't been this compassionate, making a verse to enable people to see? When the Ancients acted like this, it was all something they couldn't but do. Because later students become attached to their words and more and more give rise to intellectual interpretations, therefore they do not see the Ancients' message. If someone suddenly came forward right now to overturn the meditation seat and scatter the great assembly with shouts, we shouldn't be amazed at him. Though someone acted like this, you yourself would still have to really arrive in this realm in order to attain this.

When Hsueh Tou says, "For a thousand ages there is no reply," he is just telling you to see if Ts'ui Yen's eyebrows are there. What's so extraordinary that there is no reply for a thousand ages? You must realize that when the Ancients spat out a word or half a phrase, it wasn't blurted out; one must have the eye to judge heaven and earth before this is possible.

When Hsueh Tou writes a word or half a phrase it's like the Diamond King's jewel sword, like a lion crouching on the ground, like sparks struck from stone, like the brilliance of a lightning flash. If he didn't have the eye on his forehead, how could he have seen where that man of old (Ts'ui Yen) comes down? This lesson that Ts'ui Yen gave the people was such that "for a thousand ages there is no reply." It goes beyond Te Shan's staff and Lin Chi's shout. But say, where is Hsueh Tou's meaning for us? And how will you understand his statement, "For a thousand ages there is no reply"?

"The word 'barrier' answers him back; he loses his money and suffers punishment." What is the meaning of this? Even if

you have the eye to pass through the barrier, when you get here you still must be most thoroughgoing before you are done. Tell me, is it Ts'ui Yen who loses his money and suffers punishment, or is it Hsueh Tou, or is it Yun Men? If you can penetrate this, I'll allow that you have the eye.

"Decrepit old Pao Fu; censure or praise are impossible to apply." Does he censure himself? Does he praise the Ancients? Tell me, where does Pao Fu censure? Where does Pao Fu praise?

"Talkative Ts'ui Yen is clearly a thief." Tell me, what has he stolen, that Hsueh Tou says he's a thief? You must avoid being whirled around following after the stream of his words; when you get here you must have your own accomplishment before you'll understand.

"The clear jewel has no flaws." Hsueh Tou says that Ts'ui Yen is like a clear jewel without any flaws or cloudy patches. "Who can distinguish true from false?" It can be said that rarely is there anyone who can make this distinction.

Hsueh Tou has great talent, so he can string together the whole case from beginning to end on the single thread of this verse. Only at the very end does he then say, "Ch'ang Ch'ing knows him well; his eyebrows are grown." Tell me, where are they growing? Hurry up, take a look!

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Teaching is said to be an act of 'facing downwards' since the transcendental cannot be spoken of directly; hence it is said in Ch'an that if one speaks too much, tries to explain too much, his eyebrows may fall out. Similarly, when one has, so to speak, 'Said everything,' it is said that he isn't anxious for, or does not spare, his eyebrows.
- b. That is to say, he loses the bribe money he has offered, and suffers the punishment he was due anyway. This is a common phrase in Ch'an.

## Chao Chou's Four Gates<sup>a</sup>

### POINTER

When the bright mirror is on its stand, beauty and ugliness are distinguished by themselves. With a sharp sword in his hand, one can kill or bring life to fit the occasion. A foreigner goes and a native comes; a foreigner comes and a native goes. In the midst of death he finds life; in the midst of life he finds death. But tell me, when you get to this point, then what? If you don't have the eye to penetrate barriers, if you don't have any place to turn yourself around in, at this point obviously you won't know what to do. Tell me, what is the eye that penetrates barriers, what is a place to turn around in? To test, I cite this, look!

### CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "What is Chao Chou?"<sup>1</sup>

Chao Chou replied, "East gate, west gate, south gate, north gate."<sup>2</sup>

### NOTES

1. North of the river, south of the river, no one can say. There are thorns in the soft mud. If it's not south of the river, then it's north of the river.
2. They're open. "When we're reviling each other, I let you lock lips with me; when we're spitting at each other, I let you spew me with slobber." The public case is obviously complete; but do you see? I strike!

## COMMENTARY

When you immerse yourself in meditation and inquire about the Path, it is in order to clearly understand yourself; just avoid picking and choosing among verbal formulations. Why? Haven't you read what Chao Chou said—"The ultimate path has no difficulties; just avoid picking and choosing." And haven't you read what Yun Men said—"These days whenever followers of Ch'an gather in threes and fives their mouths chatter on and on; they say 'these are words of high ability, those are words uttered in reference to the self.'" They don't realize that within the gate of expedient means the Ancients couldn't help but establish expedient verbal formulae for latecoming students of elementary capacities who had not yet clarified their mind ground nor seen their fundamental nature. In the Patriarch's coming from the West for the sole transmission of the mind seal, directly pointing to the human mind for the perception of nature and fulfillment of Buddhahood, where were there any such complications? It is necessary to cut off words, to see the truth outside of any pattern. When you penetrate through to liberation, this can be compared to a dragon reaching the water or a tiger at home in the mountains.

To have seen but not yet penetrated, or to have penetrated but not yet become illumined—among the worthies of the past who investigated for so long, this was called seeking more instruction. To ask for more instruction when you have seen and penetrated, you then must still turn round and round on the words so there will be no doubtful sticking points. When one who has investigated for a long time asked for more instruction, this would be giving a ladder to a thief. In reality this matter does not lie in words; that is why Yun Men said, "If this matter were in words, are there no words in the twelve part canon of the three vehicles? What need would there have been for Bodhidharma's coming from the West?"

Within Fen Yang's eighteen categories of questions,<sup>b</sup> this question (in the case) is called a question to examine the host; it's also called a seeking out question. The monk posing this question is undeniably extraordinary; anyone but Chao Chou would have found it hard to reply to him. The monk asked, "What is Chao Chou?" Chao Chou is an adept in his own right, so he immediately replied, "East gate, west gate, south gate,

north gate." The monk said, "I wasn't asking about that Chao Chou." Chao Chou said, "What Chao Chou were you asking about?"

Later people said this was "no-nothing Ch'an" cheating quite a few people. What was their reason? When the monk asked about Chao Chou, Chao Chou answered, "East gate, west gate, south gate, north gate"; therefore (these people say) he was just answering about the other Chao Chou (i.e. the city). If you understand in this fashion, then any rustic from a village of three families understands more about the Buddha Dharma than you do. Such an interpretation destroys the Buddha Dharma. It's like comparing a fish eye to a bright pearl; in appearance they are alike, but actually they are not the same. As I said, if it's not south of the river, then it's north of the river. But say, is there something or is there nothing? This does indeed require you to be thoroughgoing before you understand.

Yuan "The Jurist" said, "The very last word finally reaches the closed barrier; the inner essence of pointing out the Way is not in words and explanations:

*In ten days, one breeze;*

*In five days, one rain.*

*In the peaceful countryside enjoying their tasks,*

*Drumming their full bellies and singing hallelujah."*

This is called the season of great peace. When I call this having no concerns, it is not a matter of covering your eyes with your hands and saying "I have no concerns." You must penetrate through the barrier, emerge from the forest of brambles, clean and naked, bare and untrammelled: as before you will resemble any ordinary person, but now it's all right whether there is anything of concern or there is nothing; it's up to you. Free in all directions, you will never cling to nothingness and establish it as something.

Some people say, "Fundamentally there isn't the slightest bit of anything, but when we have tea we drink tea, and when we have rice we eat rice." This is big vain talk; I call this claiming attainment without having attained, claiming realization without having realized. Basically since they haven't bored in and penetrated through, when they hear people speaking of mind or nature, of the mysterious or the abstruse, they

say, "This is just mad talk; fundamentally there isn't anything to be concerned with." This could be called one blind man leading many blind men. They are far from knowing that before the Patriarch came, people scarcely called the sky earth, or called mountains rivers; why did the Patriarch still come from the West? Everyplace where they "go up into the hall"<sup>d</sup> and "enter the room"<sup>e</sup> what do they speak of? It is all judgements of intellectual consciousness; when the feelings of judgements of intellectual consciousness are ended, only then can you see through. And when you see through, then as of old sky is sky, earth is earth, mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers.

An Ancient said, "Mind is the sense faculty, things are the objects; both elements are like flaws on a mirror." When you get to this realm you will naturally be clean and naked, bare and untrammelled. Even the ultimate principle of theory is not yet the place of peace and security. People often misunderstand this point; they stay within the realm of unconcern and neither pay homage to the Buddhas nor burn incense. They do indeed seem to be right, but in spite of that they're totally wrong. When questioned, their replies do resemble the ultimate principle, but as soon as they are pressed, they're shattered, confused; they sit there with an empty belly and a proud heart, but when they get to their last day they'll wring their hands and beat their breasts, but it'll already be too late.

This monk asked this way, Chao Chou answered this way; tell me, how will you look for them? This way won't do, not this way won't do either; ultimately, how is it? This bit is a hard one, so Hsueh Tou has brought it out in front of you to show you people.

One day while Chao Chou was sitting, his attendant reported to him, "The great king has come." Chao Chou looked surprised and said, "Myriad felicitations, O great king!" The attendant said, "He has not yet come to you, Master." Chao Chou said, "And you said he's come." He penetrated this far, he saw this far; undeniably extraordinary. Ch'an Master Hui Nan of Huang Lung commented on this, saying,

*The attendant only knew how to announce a guest,  
He did not know that he himself was in the imperial city.*

*Chao Chou went into the weeds to look for the  
man,  
Heedless of getting his whole body soaked in  
muddy water.*

Do all of you people know the truth of this? Look into Hsueh Tou's verse:

#### VERSE

*In their words they show their ability in direct confrontation:  
\*\*Echoing. When fish swim through, the water is mud-  
died.*

*Better not slander Chao Chou.\**

*The Adamantine Eye is completely void of dust.*

*\*\*Scattering sand, scattering dirt: don't  
drag Chao Chou into this. Why search the  
sky and grope over the earth?\**

*East, West, South, North—the gates face each other;*

*\*\*They're open. Where are there so many gates?  
If you turn your back on Chao Chou city, where  
will you go?\**

*An endless series of hammer blows can't smash them open.*

*\*\*Your revolving hammer won't reach. They are open.\**

#### COMMENTARY

Chao Chou faces situations just like the Diamond King's jewel sword: hesitate, and immediately he cuts your head off; time and time again he will go on and snatch your eyeballs right away. Nevertheless, this monk dares to grab the tiger's whiskers and pose a question. It's like giving rise to something where there's nothing; yet nevertheless in his words there is ability. Once the monk had shown his ability, Chao Chou did not turn his back on his question; thus he too showed his ability in answering. It wasn't that he acted like this out of whimsy; because he was a man who had penetrated through,

naturally he fit in the same groove with the monk, as if it were all arranged.

Haven't you heard? There was an outsider who came to question the World Honored One holding a sparrow in his hand. He said, "Tell me, is this sparrow in my hand dead or alive?" The World Honored One then went and straddled the threshold and said, "You tell me, am I going out or coming in?" (One version has it that the World Honored One raised his fist and asked, "Open or closed?") The outsider was speechless; then he bowed in homage. This story is just like the main case; ever since then the bloodline of the Ancients has been unbroken. Thus it is said, "The question is where the answer is, the answer is where the question is."

Since Hsueh Tou can see through things like this, he says, "In their words they show their ability in direct confrontation." There is skill in the monk's words, which seem to bear two meanings; he seems to ask about the man and he also seems to ask about the place. Without stirring a single hairsbreadth Chao Chou immediately replies to him, "East gate, west gate, south gate, north gate."

"The Adamantine Eye is completely void of dust." This praises Chao Chou snatching away both person and environment, and in his words showing his ability, giving him an answer. This is called having ability, having perspective. The moment the monk turns around, Chao Chou sees through his innermost heart. If he couldn't do this, it would have been difficult for Chao Chou to parry the monk's question. Chakra<sup>f</sup> Eye is a Sanskrit expression that means an adamant eye, a diamond eye, which illumines and sees everywhere without obstruction. Not only can it clearly make out a tiny hair a thousand miles away, but also it can determine what's false and decide what's true, distinguish gain and loss, discern what's appropriate to the occasion, and recognize right and wrong.

Hsueh Tou says, "East, west, south, north—the gates face each other; an endless series of hammer blows can't smash them open." Since the hammer blows continue without limit, why can't they smash the gates open? It's that Hsueh Tou's vision is like this. How will all of you people get these gates open? Please examine this thoroughly.



## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Chao Chou was the name of the city and the province where the Ch'an master Ts'ung Shen lived, and is hence the name by which he is usually known, according to Ch'an custom.
- b. Fen Yang Shan Ch'ao (947-1024), a great master of the Lin Chi sect, commented on many of the devices of earlier Ch'an masters and attempted to synthesize the teachings of the various Ch'an sects; for an enumeration of his 'eighteen questions,' see the appendix, "Traditional Teaching Devices."
- c. Fu Shan Fa Yuan (10-11c.) was accredited by several masters, including Fen Yang; his nickname 'The Jurist' was on account of his great knowledge of history and legal cases, which he once had to display to free himself and his traveling companions from the clutches of a corrupt magistrate in western China.
- d. This refers to masters addressing students in the teaching hall.
- e. This refers to masters interviewing disciples in the master's room.
- f. Chakra in Sanskrit actually means wheel or disc, whence it means a disc-shaped weapon, especially that of Vishnu, the maintainer in Hindu cosmology. The sense of adamantite, or diamond-like, in which it is used here, is a common Ch'an metaphor for wisdom which cuts through all obscurity and confusion, like 'the jewel sword of the Diamond King.' As the destroyer of all opinion and doubt, the image of the weapon cutting through fits in with this usage. The diamond is also used in classical Buddhist metaphor to symbolize the ultimate meditative concentration, which nothing can destroy, whence emerges the sharp wisdom whose function cuts off all afflictions, removes all obstacles to knowledge of things as they are.

# Mu Chou's Thieving Phoney

## POINTER

So, so; not so, not so. In battle, each occupies a pivotal position. That is why it is said, "If you turn upwards, then even Shakyamuni, Maitreya, Manjusri, Samantabhadra, and the myriad sages, together with all the masters in the world, all suck in their breath and swallow their voices: if you turn downwards, worms and maggots and everything that crawls, all sentient beings, each and every one emits great shining light, each and every one towers like a wall miles high." If, on the other hand, you neither face upwards nor downwards, how would you deal? If there is a principle, go by the principle; if there is no principle, go by the example. To test, I cite this; look!

## CASE

Mu Chou asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?"<sup>1</sup> The monk immediately shouted.<sup>2</sup> Mu Chou said, "I've been shouted at by you once."<sup>3</sup> Again the monk shouted.<sup>4</sup> Mu Chou said, "After three or four shouts, then what?"<sup>5</sup> The monk had nothing to say.<sup>6</sup> Mu Chou then hit him and said,<sup>7</sup> "What a thieving phoney you are!"<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. A probing pole; a reed shade.
2. An adept Ch'an traveller! But don't pretend to be enlightened. Still, he does know how to act like this.
3. A trap to fell a tiger. Why is he making a monkey of the man?
4. Look for the horns on his head: he seems to be (a real 'dragon'), but actually isn't yet. I'm afraid he has a dragon's head but a snake's tail.

5. A wave against the current. There's never been anyone who could stick his head out (in front of Mu Chou). Where will (the monk) go?
6. After all, he searched without finding.
7. If we let Mu Chou carry out his mandate to the full, then all the plants and trees on earth would be cut into three pieces.
8. He lets go the first move and falls back into the secondary.

### COMMENTARY

Whoever would uphold and establish the teaching of our school must have the eye of a true master of our school, and must have the functional ability of a true master of our school. Mu Chou's mental acuity is like a flash of lightening. He liked to put lecturers<sup>a</sup> to the test; he would usually utter a word or half a phrase like a thicket of brambles that can't be stepped on or touched. As soon as he saw a monk coming, he would say, "The case is complete; I let you have thirty blows of the staff." Or he would see a monk and call out "Elder!" If the monk turned his head, Mu Chou would say, "You board-carrying fellow!" Again, when he was teaching his community, he would say, "If you don't have a place to enter,<sup>b</sup> you must find a place to enter; once you have gained entry, you still must not turn your backs on me." Mu Chou's efforts for people were mostly like this.

This monk was also well polished and prepared, but nevertheless he had a dragon's head but a snake's tail. At the time anyone but Mu Chou would have been thrown into confusion by this monk. Like when Mu Chou asked him, "Where have you just come from?" and the monk immediately shouted: tell me, what was his meaning? The old fellow wasn't at all flustered; calmly he replied, "I've been shouted at by you once." He seems to take that shout and put it to one side, and he also seems to test him; he leans over to see how he is. Again the monk shouted; he seems to be right, but isn't yet really right—his nostrils were pierced by the old fellow, who immediately asked, "After three or four shouts, then what?" After all, this monk was speechless. Mu Chou then hit him and said, "What a thieving phoney you are!"

The aim of testing people is to know them intimately the

minute they open their mouths. Too bad this monk was speechless, provoking Mu Chou to call him a thieving phoney. If it had been any of you people who had been asked by Mu Chou, "After three or four shouts, then what?" how should you have replied in order to avoid his calling you a thieving phoney? Here if you can discern survival and destruction and distinguish right and wrong, if your feet tread the ground of reality, then who is concerned with "After three or four shouts, then what?"? But since this monk was speechless, his case was decided by old Mu Chou on the basis of the facts.

Listen to Hsueh Tou's verse:

#### VERSE

*Two shouts and a third shout:<sup>c</sup>*

*\*\*The sound of thunder is tremendous,  
but there isn't even a drop of rain.  
From ancient times up till now, there's  
rarely been anyone like this.\**

*Adepts recognize the opportune moment to change.*

*\*\*If he weren't an adept, how could (Mu Chou)  
have tested (the monk)? I'm just afraid that  
you aren't this way.\**

*If you call that riding the tiger's head,*

*\*\*Unh! Blind man! How can you ride  
a tiger's head? Quite a few people  
have understood in this way, and there  
are still people who entertain this view.\**

*The two of them would both turn out to be blind men.*

*\*\*An intimate comment from the mouth of an intimate.  
Why only two? Take what's coming to you and get out!\**

*Who is a blind man?*

*\*\*Who would you have decide?  
Fortunately there is a last word:  
(Hsueh Tou) is on the verge of  
cheating people completely.\**

*I bring it out for everyone to see.*

*\*\*When you look, it's not that it's*

*not there, but if you stare at it,  
you'll go blind. If you set your eyes  
to look, then you are grabbing empty space  
with both hands. When you bring it up this  
way, what level of activity is it?\**

#### COMMENTARY

Nothing can prevent Hsueh Tou from being able to help people. If he weren't an adept, he would just be shouting wildly at random. Therefore it is said, "Sometimes a shout isn't used as a shout; then again, sometimes a shout is used as a shout. Sometimes a shout is like a lion crouching on the ground; sometimes a shout is like the Diamond King's jewel sword."

Hsing Hua said, "I see all of you shouting in the east hall and shouting in the west hall. Don't shout at random. Even if you shout me up to the heavens, break me to pieces, and I fall back down again without even a trace of breath left in me, wait for me to revive and I'll tell you it's still not enough. Why? I have never set out real pearls for you inside the Purple Curtains. As for all of you here, what are you doing when you just go on with wild random shouting?"

Lin Chi said, "I've heard all of you imitate my shouting. But I ask you, if a monk comes from the east hall and another monk comes from the west hall, and they both shout at once, which one is the guest and which one is the host? If you can't distinguish host and guest, then you must not imitate me any more after this."

Therefore Hsueh Tou says in his verse, "Adepts recognize the opportune moment to change." Although the monk in the case was taken in by Mu Chou, still he could perceive the opportune moment to change. Tell me, where did he do this? Ch'an Master Chih of the Deer Gate graded this monk by saying, "One who knows the Law fears it." Yen T'ou said, "In battle, each man occupies a pivotal position." Master Hsin of Huang Lung said, "When you reach an impasse, change; having changed, then you get through." This is where the patriarchs cut off the tongues of everyone in the world. If you recognize the opportune moment to change, then when something is raised, you immediately know what it comes down to.

Some people say, "Why worry about Mu Chou saying, 'After three or four shouts, then what?'" and just go on shouting. Let them give twenty or thirty shouts, even go on shouting until Maitreya (the future Buddha) comes down to be born, and call this riding the tiger's head: if you understand in this fashion, it's because you don't know Mu Chou. Even if you want to see the monk, you're still too far away. To ride a tiger's head one must have a sword in his hand and versatility too before he can succeed.

Hsueh Tou says, if you call this riding the tiger's head, "The two of them would both turn out to be blind men." Hsueh Tou is like a long sword leaning against the sky, stern and awesome in full majesty. If you understand Hsueh Tou's meaning, you will naturally understand everything at once. Then you will see that the latter part of Hsueh Tou's verse is just making footnotes.

Hsueh Tou goes on to say "Who is a blind man?" Tell me, is it the guest who's blind, or is it the host who's blind? Aren't guest and host both blind at the same time? "I bring it out for everyone to see." This is the living place, where Hsueh Tou finishes the verse all at once. Yet why does he say, "I bring it out for everyone to see"? Tell me, how will you see it? Open your eyes and you can; shut your eyes and you can too. Is there anyone who can avoid it?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. These were professor-monks of the scholastic schools, specializing in various Buddhist texts and philosophies and expounding them in temples devoted to the study of the written teachings. They are sometimes derided in Ch'an literature for being too attached to doctrines and theories, or full of self-importance and pride in their learning, but without real accomplishment.
- b. A place to enter the Path; this is the true initiation, disentanglement from the bonds of egoism. Beyond this is the phase of 'getting oneself out' or 'showing oneself,' which means to transcend the state of quiescence and nothingness, so to speak, to go beyond the point of entry and absorption into the Path, and bring out the active function of illumination. As an Ancient said, "A sage has no self, but there is nothing that is not his self." Although the

phase of getting out or showing has attributes and is personal in the sense that the nirvana of the Great Vehicle is personal, it is beyond the concept of ego and personal possession, and is like the revelation of the adamantine being spoken of in esoteric Buddhism.

- c. "Two shouts" refers to the monk; "a third shout" refers to Mu Chou.

# Huang Po's Gobblers of Dregs

## POINTER

The great capacity of Buddhas and Patriarchs is completely within his control; the lifeline of humans and gods is entirely subject to his direction. With a casual word or phrase he astounds the crowd and stirs the masses; with one device, one object, he smashes chains and knocks off fetters. Meeting transcendental potential, he brings up transcendental matters. But tell me, who has ever come on like this? Are there any who know where he is at? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

Huang Po, instructing the community, said,<sup>1</sup> "All of you people are gobblers of dregs; if you go on travelling around this way,<sup>2</sup> where will you have Today?<sup>3</sup> Do you know that there are no teachers of Ch'an in all of China?"<sup>4</sup>

At that time a monk came forward and said, "Then what about those in various places who order followers and lead communities?"<sup>5</sup>

Huang Po said, "I do not say that there is no Ch'an; it's just that there are no teachers."<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. Drawing water, he's limited by (the size of) the bowl. He swallows all in one gulp. No patchrobed monk in the world can leap clear.
2. He's said it. You'll wear out your straw sandals.
3. What's the use of Today? Nothing can stop him from astounding the crowd and stirring up the community.
4. I hadn't realized. He swallows all in one gulp. He too is a cloud-dwelling saint.



5. He too gives a good thrust; confronting the situation, he couldn't but do so.
6. He just can't explain. The tiles are scattered, the ice melts. He's a fellow with a dragon's head but a snake's tail.

#### COMMENTARY

Huang Po was seven feet tall; on his forehead there was (a lump like) a round pearl. He understood Ch'an by nature. It's also said that he once travelled in the company of a saint: once when the master was travelling to Mount T'ien T'ai, he met a monk on the way. They talked and laughed together like old acquaintances. Huang Po looked him over carefully; the light in his eyes pierced people, and his appearance was extremely unusual. As they thus travelled along together, when they came to a swollen valley stream, Huang Po planted his staff (in the ground), took off his hat, and stopped there. The other monk tried to take the master across with him, but the master said, "Please cross over yourself." The other one then gathered up his robes and walked upon the waves as though treading on level ground. He looked back and said, "Come across! Come across!" The master upbraided him, saying, "You self-perfected fellow! If I had known you would concoct wonders, I would have broken your legs!" The other monk sighed in admiration and said, "You are a true vessel of the teaching of the Great Vehicle." As his words ended, he disappeared.

When Huang Po first met Pai Chang, Pai Chang said, "Magnificent! Imposing! Where have you come from?" Huang Po said, "Magnificent and imposing, I've come from the mountains." Pai Chang asked, "What have you come for?" Huang Po said, "Not for anything else." Pai Chang esteemed him deeply as a vessel (of Dharma).

The next day he took leave of Pai Chang. Pai Chang asked, "Where are you going?" Huang Po replied, "To Kiangsi to pay my respects to the Great Master Ma." Pai Chang said, "The Great Master Ma has already passed on." Huang Po asked, "What did he have to say when he was alive?" Pai Chang then related the circumstances of his second encounter with Ma Tsu:

"When Ma Tsu saw me approach, he raised his whisk. I asked, 'Do you identify with this action or detach from this action?' Ma Tsu then hung the whisk on the corner of the meditation seat. There was a long silence; then Ma Tsu asked me, 'Later on, when you're flapping your lips, how will you help people?' I took the whisk and held it up. Ma Tsu said, 'Do you identify with this action or detach from this action?' I took the whisk and hung it back on the corner of the meditation seat. Ma Tsu drew himself up and gave a shout that left me deaf for three days."

Huang Po unconsciously stuck out his tongue in awe. Pai Chang said, "After this, won't you be a successor of the Great Master Ma?" Huang Po said, "No. Today, because of the master's recital, I've gotten to see the Great Master Ma's great capacity and its great function; but if I were to succeed to Master Ma, in the future I would be bereft of descendants." Pai Chang said, "It is so, it is so. If your view equals your teacher, you have less than half your teacher's virtue; only when your wisdom goes beyond your teacher are you worthy to pass on the transmission. As your view is right now, it seems that you have ability which transcends any teacher." You must see for yourself how father and son act in that house before you begin to understand.

Again one day Huang Po asked Pai Chang, "How has the vehicle of the school that comes down from ancient times been demonstrated and taught?" Pai Chang was silent for a long time; Huang Po said, "You shouldn't let posterity be cut off." Pai Chang said, "I thought you were the man." Then he got up and went into his abbot's quarters.

Huang Po was an informal friend of prime minister P'ei Hsiu; he explained the essence of mind<sup>a</sup> to him. When P'ei was commander of Wan Ling, he invited the master to come to the district capital. He showed the master a book (expressing) his understanding. The master took the book and put it down on the seat without even opening it to look through it. After a long silence, the master asked, "Do you understand?" P'ei said, "I don't understand." Huang Po said, "If you had understood this way, you still would have gotten somewhere; if you're still trying to describe it with paper and ink, where would there still be room for my school?" At this P'ei offered a verse of praise:

*From the great man he has inherited the mind seal;  
 There's a round jewel on his forehead, his body is  
 seven feet tall.  
 He hung up his staff and stayed ten years by the  
 River Shu;  
 Today his floating coracle has crossed to the banks  
 of the Chang.  
 Eight thousand dragons and elephants follow his  
 giant strides;  
 Over ten thousand miles fragrant flowers join in his  
 excellent cause.  
 I hope to serve the master as his disciple;  
 I do not know to whom he will entrust his teaching.*

The master made no sign of being pleased, but said,<sup>b</sup>

*My mind is like the boundlessness of the great  
 ocean;  
 My mouth spews red lotuses to nurse a sick body.  
 I myself have a pair of hands with nothing to do;  
 I have never received an idle man.*

After Huang Po was dwelling (in a temple as a teacher), his active edge was sharp and dangerous. When Lin Chi was in his community, Mu Chou was the head monk. (Mu Chou) asked (Lin Chi), "How long have you been here? Why don't you go ask (Huang Po) a question?" Chi said, "What would you have me ask?" The head monk said, "Why don't you go ask what is the essential meaning of the Buddha Dharma?" Chi then went and asked (Huang Po); three times he was beaten and driven out. He took leave of the head monk, saying, "I have been bidden to ask the question three times by you, and have been beaten and driven out. Perhaps my affinity is not here; for now I will leave the mountain." The head monk said, "If you're going, you should bid farewell to the master (Huang Po) first." The head monk went beforehand and said to Huang Po, "The questioning monk is a very rare one; why don't you work on him to make him into a tree to provide cool shade for people of later times?" Huang Po said, "I already know."

When Chi came to take leave, Po said, "You don't need to go anywhere else; just go to the riverbank at Ta An and see Ta Yu."

When Chi got to Ta Yu, he related the preceding story and said, "I do not know where my fault was." Ta Yu said, "Huang Po was so kind, he exerted himself to the utmost for you; why do you go on speaking of fault or no fault?" Chi was suddenly greatly enlightened: he said, "There's not much to Huang Po's Buddha Dharma." Ta Yu grabbed and held him and said, "You just said you were at fault; now instead you say there's not much to the Buddha Dharma." Chi hit Ta Yu in the side three times with his fist; Yu pushed him away and said, "Your teacher is Huang Po; it has nothing to do with me."

One day Huang Po, instructing his community, said, "The Great Master Fa Jung of Ox Head Mountain<sup>c</sup> spoke horizontally and spoke vertically, but he still didn't know the key of transcendence. These days the Ch'an followers after Shih T'ou and Ma Tsu speak of Ch'an and speak of the Way most voluminously." But why did Huang Po talk this way? It was because of this that he taught the community by saying, "All of you are gobblers of dregs; if you travel around like this, you'll get laughed at by people. As soon as you hear of a place with eight hundred or a thousand people, you immediately go there. It won't do just to seek out the hubbub; if you always take things this easy here, then where else would there be this matter of Today?"

In T'ang times they liked to revile people by calling them "gobblers of dregs," so many people say that Huang Po was reviling the people. Those with eyes see for themselves what he was getting at. The whole idea is to let down a hook to fish out people's questions. In the assembly there was a Ch'an man who didn't fear for his body or life, so he could come forth this way from the crowd to question Huang Po, saying, "Then what about those in various places who order followers and lead communities?" And he makes a good point, too. After all the old fellow Huang Po couldn't explain, so instead he broke down and said, "I don't say there is no Ch'an, just that there are no teachers." But tell me, where does his meaning lie?

That essence of the school that has come down from ancient times—sometimes holding, sometimes letting go, sometimes killing, sometimes giving life, sometimes releasing, sometimes gathering up—I dare to ask all of you, what would be a teacher of Ch'an? As soon as I speak this way, I've already lost my head. People, where are your nostrils? (A pause) They've been pierced through!

## VERSE

*His cold severe solitary mien does not take pride in itself;  
 \*\*He himself doesn't know he has it. He too is a cloud-dwelling saint.\**

*Solemnly dwelling in the sea of the world, he distinguishes dragons and snakes.*

*\*\*It is still necessary to distinguish initiate and uninitiate, and it is also necessary that black and white be clearly distinguished.\**

*Ta Chung the Son of Heaven has been lightly handled;*

*\*\*What Ta Chung the Son of Heaven are you talking about? However great, he too must get up from the ground; and even higher, there's still the sky—what about that?\**

*Three times he personally felt those claws and fangs at work.*

*\*\*A dead frog. Why so talkative? It's not yet anything extraordinary; it's still a minor skill. When his great capacity and great function become manifest, then the whole world in all ten directions, the mountains and rivers and the great earth, all are at Huang Po's place begging for their lives.\**

## COMMENTARY

This verse by Hsueh Tou seems just like praise on a portrait of Huang Po, yet you people mustn't understand it as "praise on a portrait." Right in his words there's a place to get oneself out.<sup>d</sup> Hsueh Tou clearly says, "His cold severe solitary mien does not take pride in itself." When Huang Po instructed the community this way, he wasn't contesting others or asserting himself, displaying himself or boasting of himself. If you understand what happened here, you are free in all directions: sometimes you stand alone on a solitary peak, sometimes you stretch out in the bustling market place. How could you one-sidedly hold fast to a single corner? The more you abandon, the more you aren't at rest; the more you seek, the more you don't see; the more you take on, the more you sink down. An Ancient said, "Without wings, fly through the sky; with fame, become known throughout the world." Wholeheartedly dis-

card the marvelous wonders of the principle of Buddha Dharma; let it all go at once, and then you will after all have gotten somewhere, and wherever you are it will naturally become manifest.

Hsueh Tou says, "Solemnly dwelling in the sea of the world, he distinguishes dragons and snakes." Is it a dragon or is it a snake? As soon as anyone comes in through the door, he puts him to the test; this is called the eye to distinguish dragons and snakes, the ability to capture tigers and rhinos. Hsueh Tou also said, "Judging dragons and snakes—how is that eye correct? Capturing tigers and rhinos—that skill is not complete."

Hsueh Tou also says, "Ta Chung the Son of Heaven has been lightly handled; three times he personally felt those claws and fangs at work." Huang Po is not just acting bad right here (in this case); he's always been like this. As for Ta Chung the Son of Heaven (Emperor), it is recorded in the *Continued Biographies of the Hsien T'ung Era* that the T'ang Emperor Hsien Tsung (r. 806–820) had two sons, one called Mu Tsung and the other called Hsuan Tsung. This Hsuan Tsung (r. 847–860) was the Ta Chung Emperor.

When Hsuan Tsung was thirteen years old, though still young, he was keen and clever, and always liked to sit in the lotus posture. During the reign of Mu Tsung (821–824), one time when the morning audience was over, Hsuan Tsung playfully mounted the (Imperial) Dragon Throne and went through the motions of saluting the assembled officials. One of the great ministers saw this and thought that Hsuan Tsung was demented, so he reported this to Mu Tsung. When Mu Tsung saw Hsuan Tsung, he rubbed his head and sighed, saying, "My younger brother is indeed a valiant son of my clan."

Mu Tsung died in 824, leaving three sons, called Ching Tsung, Wen Tsung, and Wu Tsung. Ching Tsung succeeded to his father's throne and reigned for two years until the inner court plotted against him and removed him. Wen Tsung succeeded to the throne and reigned for fourteen years. When Wu Tsung came to the throne, he always spoke of Hsuan Tsung as an imbecile. One day, filled with hatred for Hsuan Tsung because long ago he had playfully climbed up on his father's throne, he finally had Hsuan Tsung beaten almost to death, thrown out into the back gardens, and drenched with filthy water to revive him.

After this Hsuan Tsung went into hiding in the community of the Master Chih Hsien of Hsiang Yen. Later he had his head shaved as a novice, but had not yet received full ordination. He travelled around with Chih Hsien; when they got to Mount Lu, Chih Hsien made up a poem about a waterfall:

*Piercing the clouds, penetrating rock, never declining the work;  
When the land is distant, you know how high is the place it appears.*

Having intoned these two lines, Chih Hsien remained a long time in thought; he wanted to draw out a stream of words from Hsuan Tsung to see what he was like. Hsuan Tsung continued the verse, saying,

*How can the mountain torrent be held back?  
Eventually it must return to the great ocean to become waves.*

At this Chih Hsien knew that Hsuan Tsung was no ordinary man, and he silently acknowledged him.

Later Hsuan Tsung went into the community at Yen Kuan, where he was asked to be the temple scribe. Huang Po was there serving as head monk. One day as Huang Po was paying respects to (an image of a) Buddha, Hsuan Tsung saw him and asked, "If you don't seek from Buddha, don't seek from Dharma, and don't seek from the Sangha, then what are you seeking by bowing in respect?" Huang Po replied, "I don't seek from Buddha, I don't seek from the Dharma, and I don't seek from the Sangha; I always pay my respects this way." Hsuan Tsung said, "What's the use of paying respect?" Immediately Huang Po slapped him. Hsuan Tsung said, "Too coarse." Huang Po said, "What place is this to talk of coarse and fine?" and slapped him again. Later, when Hsuan Tsung succeeded to the throne of the nation, he bestowed on Huang Po the title, "Coarse-acting Ascetic." When prime minister P'ei was at court later, he proposed that Huang Po be given the title Tuan Chi Ch'an Shih, "Boundless Ch'an Master."

Hsueh Tou knew where his bloodline appeared, so he could use it cleverly. Right now is there anyone to use his claws and fangs? If so, then I'll strike!

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. This refers to the *Ch'uan Hsin Fa Yao*, the "Essential Method of the Transmission of Mind," a collection of Huang Po's sermons for P'ei Hsiu.
- b. According to Tenkei Denson, the following verse is probably not really Huang Po's; it does not appear in the version of this story given in the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu*. Tenkei also says that the following story of Lin Chi's enlightenment also has no particular use in this commentary, and is probably a later insertion.
- c. 593–657; he was later claimed to be a successor of Tao Hsin, the Fourth Patriarch of Ch'an after Bodhidharma. A distinguished meditation master, Fa Jung is known as the first patriarch of the so-called Ox Head sect of Ch'an, which continued for ten generations and produced numerous distinguished masters. Although historically of independent origin, this sect later developed close relations with the streams of the Ts'ao Ch'i succession.
- d. This means a place which reveals Huang Po's state, and the way a student must go to realize his sphere of attainment. To 'get oneself out' has the meaning of 'appearing in the world' (though this latter expression usually has the specific meaning of accepting leadership of a community as the spiritual guide, it can have the more inclusive meaning of actively revealing enlightened knowledge and conduct). The Zen master Dogen, in his *Fukanzazengi*, says, 'Although one may roam freely in the realm of entry, one may lack a living road to get himself out on.'



# Tung Shan's Three Pounds of Hemp

## POINTER

The sword that kills people, the sword that brings people to life: this is the standard way of high antiquity and the essential pivot for today as well. If you discuss killing, you don't harm a single hair; if you discuss giving life, you lose your body and life. Therefore it is said, "The thousand sages have not transmitted the single transcendental path; students toil over appearances like monkeys grasping at reflections." Tell me, since it is not transmitted, why then so many complicated public cases? Let those with eyes try to explain.

## CASE

A monk asked Tung Shan, "What is Buddha?"<sup>1</sup>  
Tung Shan said, "Three pounds of hemp."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. Iron brambles; no patchrobed monk on earth can leap clear.
2. Clearly. Worn out straw sandals. He points to a pagoda tree to scold a willow tree.

## COMMENTARY

So many people misunderstand this public case. It really is hard to chew on, since there's no place for you to sink your teeth into. What is the reason? Because it's bland and flavorless. The Ancients had quite a few answers to the question "What is Buddha?" One said, "The one in the shrine." One said, "The thirty-two auspicious marks." One said, "A bamboo whip on a mountain covered with a forest grown from a staff."

And so on, to Tung Shan, who said, "Three pounds of hemp." He couldn't be stopped from cutting off the tongues of the Ancients.

Many people base their understanding on the words and say that Tung Shan was in the storehouse at the time weighing out hemp when the monk questioned him, and therefore he answered in this way. Some say that when Tung Shan is asked about the east he answers about the west. Some say that since you are Buddha and yet you still go to ask about Buddha, Tung Shan answers this in a roundabout way. And there's yet another type of dead men who say that the three pounds of hemp is itself Buddha. But these interpretations are irrelevant. If you seek from Tung Shan's words this way, you can search until Maitreya Buddha is born down here and still never see it even in a dream.

What's the reason? Words and speech are just vessels to convey the Path. Far from realizing the intent of the Ancients, people just search in their words; what grasp can they get on it? Haven't you seen how an Ancient said, "Originally the Path is wordless; with words we illustrate the Path. Once you see the Path, the words are immediately forgotten." To get to this point, you must first go back to your own original state. Just this three pounds of hemp is like the single track of the great road to the Capital; as you raise your feet and put them down, there's nothing that is not this. This story is the same as Yun Men's saying "Cake"<sup>a</sup> but it's unavoidably difficult to understand. My late teacher Wu Tsu made a verse about it:

*The cheap-selling board-carrying fellow  
Weighs it out, three pounds of hemp.  
With a hundred thousand years of unsold goods,  
He has no place to put it all.*

You must clean it all up; when your defiling feelings, conceptual thinking, and comparative judgements of gain and loss and right and wrong are all cleared away at once, then you will spontaneously understand.

#### VERSE

*The Golden Raven<sup>b</sup> hurries;  
\*\*In the left eye, half a pound.*

*The swift sparrowhawk can't overtake it.  
Lay the body down in flames of fire.\**

*The Jade Rabbit<sup>c</sup> is swift.*

*\*\*In the right eye, eight ounces.*

*He makes his nest in the palace of Heng O, the Moon Lady.\**

*Has there ever been carelessness in a good response!*

*\*\*As the bell when struck, as the valley embracing the echo.\**

*To see Tung Shan as laying out facts in accordance with the situation*

*\*\*Mistakenly sticking by the zero point of the scale; it's just Your Reverence who sees things this way.\**

*Is like a lame tortoise and a blind turtle entering an empty valley.*

*\*\*Take what's coming to you and get out. In the same pit, there's no different dirt. Who killed your sparrowhawk!\**

*Flowering groves, multicolored forests;*

*\*\*A double case; he handles all crimes with the same indictment. As before, they're the same.\**

*Bamboo of the South, wood of the North.*

*\*\*A quadruple case. He puts a head on top of his head.\**

*So I think of Ch'ang Ch'ing and Officer Lu:*

*\*\*A leper drags his companions along with him.*

*I am this way, and Hsueh Tou is this way too.\**

*He knew how to say he should laugh, not cry.*

*\*\*Ha ha. By day and by night he adds to the suffering.\**

*Ha!*

*\*\*Bah! What is this! I strike!\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou can see all the way through, so he immediately says, "The Golden Raven hurries; the Jade Rabbit is swift." This is of the same kind as Tung Shan's reply "Three pounds of hemp." The sun rises, the moon sets; every day it's like this. People often make up intellectual interpretations and just say,

"The Golden Raven is the left eye and the Jade Rabbit is the right eye." As soon as they're questioned, they put a glare in their eyes and say, "They're here!" What connection is there? If you understand in this way, the whole school of Bodhidharma would be wiped off the face of the earth. That is why it is said,

*Letting down the hook in the four seas  
Just to fish out terrible dragons;  
The mysterious device outside conventions  
Is for seeking out those who know the self.*

Hsueh Tou is a man who has left the heaps and elements;<sup>d</sup> how could he make up this sort of interpretation? Hsueh Tou easily goes to where the barriers are broken and the hinges are smashed to reveal a little something to let you see; there he adds a footnote, saying, "Has there ever been carelessness in a good response?" Tung Shan does not reply lightly to this monk; he is like a bell when struck, like a valley embracing an echo. Great or small, he responds accordingly, never daring to make a careless impression. At once Hsueh Tou has brought out his guts and presented them to all of you. Hsueh Tou had a verse on being tranquil but responding well:

*Presented face to face, it's not a matter of multiplicity;  
Dragons and snakes are easily distinguished, but a patchrobed monk is hard to deceive.  
The golden hammer's shadow moves, the jewel sword's light is cold;  
They strike directly; hurry up and take a look!*

When Tung Shan first saw Yun Men, Yun Men asked him, "Where have you just come from?" Tung Shan said, "From Cha Tu." Yun Men said, "Where did you spend the summer retreat?" Tung Shan said, "In Hunan, at Pao Tz'u." Yun Men asked, "When did you leave there?" Tung Shan said, "August twenty-fifth." Yun Men said, "I should let you have three score blows of the staff; go meditate in the hall."

That evening Tung Shan entered Yun Men's room; drawing near, he asked, "Where was my fault?" Yun Men said, "You rice bag! From Kiangsi to Hunan, and still you go on this way." At these words Tung Shan was vastly and greatly awakened. After a while he said, "Another day I'll go to a place where

there are no human hearths and build myself a hut; I won't store even a single grain of rice or plant any vegetables. There I'll receive and wait upon the great sages coming and going from the ten directions; I'll pull out all the nails and pegs for them, I'll pull off their greasy caps and strip them of their stinking shirts. I'll make them all clean and free, so they can be unconcerned people." Yun Men said, "Your body is the size of a coconut, but you can open such a big mouth."

Tung Shan then took his leave and departed. His enlightenment at the time was a direct complete breakthrough; how could it have anything in common with small petty views? Later when he appeared in the world to respond to people's various potentialities, the words "Three pounds of hemp" were understood everywhere merely as a reply to the question about Buddha; they just make their reasoning in terms of Buddha. Hsueh Tou says that to understand Tung Shan's reply as expressing facts in accordance with the situation is like a lame tortoise or a blind turtle going into an empty valley; when will they ever find a way out?

"Flowering groves, multicolored forests." When a monk asked Master Hsien of Fu Teh,<sup>e</sup> "What is the mind of the Buddhas of antiquity?" The master replied, "Flowering groves, multicolored forests." The monk also asked Ming Chiao, "What is the inner meaning of 'three pounds of hemp'?" Ming Chiao said, "Bamboo of the South, wood of the North." The monk came back and recounted this to Tung Shan, who said, "I won't explain this just for you, but I will explain it to the whole community." Later he went into the hall and said, "Words do not express facts, speech does not accord with the situation. Those who accept words are lost, and those who linger over phrases are deluded."

To smash people's intellectual views, Hsueh Tou purposely draws these together on a single thread to produce his verse. Yet people of later times still give rise to even more intellectual views and say, "'Three pounds of hemp' is the robe of mourning; bamboo is the staff of mourning: that's why he said, 'Bamboo of the South, wood of the North.' 'Flowering groves, multicolored forests' is the flowers and plants painted on the coffin." Do these people realize their disgrace? How far are they from realizing that "bamboo of the South, wood of the North" and "three pounds of hemp" are just like "daddy" and

"poppa." When the Ancients answered with a turn of words, their intention was definitely not like these (interpretations). It's just like Hsueh Tou's saying, "The Golden Raven hurries; the Jade Rabbit is swift"—it's just as broad. It's just that real gold and fool's gold are hard to tell apart; similar written characters are not the same.

Hsueh Tou has the kind heart of an old woman; he wants to break up your feelings of doubt, so he brings in more dead men. "So I think of Ch'ang Ch'ing and Officer Lu; he knew how to say he should laugh, not cry." To discuss the verse itself, the first three lines by themselves have already completed the verse. But I ask you, since the whole universe is just this three pounds of hemp, why does Hsueh Tou still have so many complications? It's just that his compassion is excessive, therefore he is like this.

When Officer Lu Hsuan was Inspector of Hsuan Chou, he studied with Nan Ch'uan. When Nan Ch'uan passed on, Lu heard the (sound of) mourning so he entered the temple for the funeral. He laughed aloud a great laugh. The temple director said to him, "The late master and you were teacher and disciple; why aren't you crying?" Officer Lu said, "If you can say something, I'll cry." The temple director was speechless. Lu gave a loud lament; "Alas! Alas! Our late master is long gone." Later Ch'ang Ch'ing heard of this and said, "The officer should have laughed, not cried."

Hsueh Tou borrows the essence of this meaning to say that if you make up these kinds of intellectual interpretations, this calls for laughter, not crying. This is so, but at the very end there's a single word which is unavoidably easy to misunderstand, when he goes on to say "Ha!" Has Hsueh Tou washed himself clean?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Asked, "What is talk that goes beyond buddhas and patriarchs?" Yun Men said, "Cake."
- b. The Golden Raven is the sun.
- c. The Jade Rabbit is the moon.
- d. The heaps (Sanskrit *skandha*) are form (matter), sensation, perception, synergies, and consciousness; the elements (Sanskrit

*dhatu*) are the six sense faculties (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind), the six sense fields (form, sound, smell, taste, feeling, and entity), and the six associated consciousnesses. While the five heaps are often used to refer specifically to the human being, in which context the synergies include all sorts of mental activities such as emotion and volition, functional relations not connected with mind are also classified as synergies. It is obvious in this context that to leave the five heaps and eighteen elements does not mean annihilation, but refers to being free from attachment to them, having died the esoteric death, sloughed off the claims of egoism, under whose sway emotion and intellect, thought and habit, had been in fact inseparable.

- e. The names of Chien and Ming Chiao are used after the critical edition of Ito Yuten, in accord with the One Night Book, which also accords with tradition from other sources; the Chang version has it that both these questions were posed to Chih Men, Hsueh Tou's teacher, but this poses a contradiction in time.

# Pa Ling's Snow in a Silver Bowl

## POINTER

Clouds are frozen over the great plains, but the whole world is not hidden. When snow covers the white flowers, it's hard to distinguish the outlines. Its coldness is as cold as snow and ice; its fineness is as fine as rice powder. Its depths are hard for even a Buddha's eye to peer into; its secrets are impossible for demons and outsiders to fathom. Leaving aside "understanding three when one is raised" for the moment, still he cuts off the tongues of everyone on earth. Tell me, whose business is this? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Pa Ling, "What is the school of Kanadeva?"<sup>1</sup>  
Pa Ling said, "Piling up snow in a silver bowl."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. A white horse enters the white flowers. What are you saying? Check!
2. He blocks off your throat. A profuse outburst!<sup>a</sup>

## COMMENTARY

People often misunderstand and say this is a heretical school. What does this have to do with it? The fifteenth Patriarch, the honorable Kanadeva, was indeed (at one time) numbered among the outsiders; but when he met the fourteenth Patriarch, the honorable Nagarjuna (who presented a bowl of water to him), he put a needle into the bowl: Nagarjuna esteemed his capacity, transmitted the Buddha Mind School to him, and invested him as the fifteenth Patriarch.



In doctrinal disputes in India the winner holds a red flag in his hand, while the loser turns his clothes inside out and departs through a side door. Those who wanted to hold doctrinal disputes in India were required to obtain royal permission. Bells and drums would be sounded in the great temples and afterwards the debates could begin. In Kanadeva's day the heretics impounded the bell and drum in the (Buddhist) community temple in a purge. At this time the honorable Kanadeva knew that the Buddhist Teaching was in trouble, so he made use of his supernatural powers to ascend the bell tower and ring the bell, for he wanted to drive out the heretics.

Soon one of the heretics called out, "Who is up in the tower ringing the bell?" Kanadeva said, "A deva." The heretic asked, "Who is the deva?" Kanadeva said, "I." The heretic said "Who is 'I'?" Kanadeva said, "'You' is a dog." The heretic asked, "Who is the dog?" Kanadeva said, "The dog is you." After seven go-rounds like this, the heretic realized he was beaten, so he submitted and himself opened the door of the bell tower, whereupon Kanadeva came down from the tower holding a red flag. The heretic said, "Why do you not follow?" Kanadeva said, "Why do you not precede?" The heretic said, "You're a knave." Kanadeva said, "You're a freeman."

Over and over Kanadeva would respond to questions like this, using his unobstructed powers of argument to overcome heretics, who would therefore submit. At such times the honorable Kanadeva would hold a red flag in his hand, and the one who had been defeated would stand beneath the flag. Among the heretics, to have their hands cut was generally the punishment to expiate the fault (or defeat in argument), but at this time Kanadeva put a stop to this; he only required his defeated adversaries to shave off their hair and enter the Buddhist path. Therefore the school of Kanadeva flourished greatly. Later on Hsueh Tou uses these facts to versify this.

Ma Tsu said, "The *Lankavatara* scripture says that Buddha's words have mind as their source and the gate of nothingness as the gate of the Dharma." Ma Tsu also said, "Whenever there are words and phrases, this is the Kanadeva school; just this he considered to be principal."

All of you are guests in the school of the patchrobed monks; have you ever thoroughly comprehended the school of Kanadeva as well? If you have thoroughly comprehended it, then the ninety-six kinds of heretics are all vanquished by you

all at once. If you have not been able to comprehend it thoroughly, then you can't avoid going off with your clothes on inside out. Tell me, what about this? If you say words are it, this has no connection; if you say words are not it, this has no connection either. Tell me, where does Great Master Ma's meaning lie?

Later Yun Men said, "Great Master Ma spoke good words, but no one asks about it." Thereupon a monk asked, "What is the school of Kanadeva?" Yun Men said, "Of the ninety-six kinds of heretics, you are the lowest."

Formerly there was a monk who was taking leave of Ta Sui. Ta Sui asked, "Where are you going?" The monk said, "To do homage to Samantabhadra." Ta Sui raised his whisk and said, "Manjusri and Samantabhadra are both here." The monk drew a circle and pushed it towards Ta Sui with his hand; then he threw it behind him. Ta Sui said, "Attendant, bring a spot of tea for this monk."

Yun Men also said, "In India they cut off heads and arms; here you take what's coming to you and get out." He also said, "The red flag is in my hand."

In the community (of Yun Men) Pa Ling was called Mouthy Chien. When he was travelling around he always sewed sitting mats.<sup>b</sup> He had attained deeply into the great matter upon which Yun Men tread: thus he was outstanding. Later he appeared in the world as a Dharma successor to Yun Men. Formerly he dwelt at Pa Ling in Yueh Chou (in Hunan). He didn't compose any document of succession to the teaching, but just took three turning words to offer up to Yun Men: "What is the Path? A clear eyed man falls into a well." "What is the sword (so sharp it cuts) a hair blown (against it)? Each branch of coral upholds the moon." "What is the school of Kanadeva? Piling up snow in a silver bowl." Yun Men said, "Later on, on the anniversary of my death, just recite these three turning words, and you will have repaid my kindness in full." Thereafter, as it turned out, he did not hold ceremonial feasts on the anniversaries of his death, but followed Yun Men's will and just brought up these turning words.

Although people from all over have given answers to this question ("What is the school of Kanadeva?"), mostly they have turned to events to make up their answers; there is only Pa Ling who speaks as he does—he's extremely lofty and

unique, unavoidably difficult to understand. Then too, without revealing a trace of his sharp point, he takes on enemies on all sides, and blow by blow finds a way to get himself out. He has the skill to fell tigers; he strips off human emotional views. As for the matter of One Form,<sup>c</sup> to get here you must have penetrated all the way through on your own, but after all you must meet another (enlightened) person before you are done. Therefore it is said, "When Tao Wu brandished his sceptre, one who was his equal would understand;<sup>d</sup> when Shih Kung bent his bow, an adept would tacitly comprehend."<sup>e</sup> For this truth, if you have no master to seal and instruct you, what teaching can you use to carry on the esoteric conversation?

Afterwards Hsueh Tou picked things out and brought them up for people in this verse:

VERSE

*Old Hsin K'ai*

*\*\*A thousand soldiers are easy to get, but one general is hard to find. Talkative teacher!\**

*Is truly something else:*

*\*\*What truth is this? Have you ever felt his single knock on your head, even in a dream?\**

*He knows how to say, "Piling up snow in a silver bowl."*

*\*\*The frog can't leap out of the basket. A double case. Quite a few people will lose their bodies and lives.\**

*The ninety-six each must know for themselves;*

*\*\*You're included too; but do you know, Reverend? All are buried in the same pit.\**

*If you don't know, then ask the moon in the sky.*

*\*\*It's farther than far. Take what's coming to you and get out. Address your plea to the sky.\**

*The school of Kanadeva, Kanadeva's school;*

*\*\*What are you saying? I'm here. A mouthful of frost.\**

*Beneath the red flag, arouse the pure wind.*

*\*\*Shattered in a hundred fragments. Having struck, I'll say I've already hit it. Just cut off your heads and arms, and I'll speak a phrase for you.\**

## COMMENTARY

"Old Hsin K'ai." Hsin K'ai is the name of a monastery (in Pa Ling, Hunan, where the master Pa Ling stayed, hence a name for him). "Is truly something else." Hsueh Tou has ample praise for him. But tell me, how is Pa Ling special? "All words are the Buddha Dharma." When I talk like this, what's the reason for it? Hsueh Tou subtly reveals a little of his meaning when he says it's just that Pa Ling is truly something else.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards he opens up and says, "He can say, 'Piling up snow in a silver bowl.'"

Hsueh Tou goes on to provide you with further footnotes: "The ninety-six must each know for themselves." Before they can do so, they must acknowledge defeat. If you don't know, ask the moon in the sky. The Ancient used to give this answer, "Ask the moon in the sky."

Hsueh Tou's eulogy being finished, at the end there must be a living road, a phrase where the lion rears. He raises it higher for you and says, "The school of Kanadeva, the Kanadeva school; beneath the red flag, arouse the pure wind." Pa Ling said he piled up snow in a silver bowl; why then does Hsueh Tou say he roused the pure wind beneath the red flag? Do you know that Hsueh Tou kills people without using a sword?

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. This obscure phrase is interpreted by commentators (hence translated) in various ways. It means the question is cracked and shattered, the answer is piercing and penetrating. Hence it can mean profusion, confusion, or it can mean opened up, clearly distinct (this latter includes the manifold, that everything is revealed in all its multiplicity). One commentator says that in this case it refers to the profuse discourse of the Kanadeva school, represented by Pa Ling's answer. Tenkei says that it means here burst open, clear and distinct, not hard to see.
- b. This is interpreted in two ways; one, that Pa Ling travelled around with his sitting mat folded up, meaning that he did not prostrate himself before the teachers he visited (one rolls out one's mat to bow in full prostration). It is also interpreted to mean that he used to sew others' sitting mats for them.

- c. Or, 'One Color'; unity, or equanimity. In Tung Shan Liang Chieh's *Pao Ching San Mei Ke*, 'Song of the Jewel Mirror Concentration' (9th century), it says 'Piling up snow in a silver bowl, hiding a heron in the bright moonlight; when you array them they are not the same, when you mix them you know where they are.' Silver and snow, moonlight and the white heron, are all white, but when associated, they are not identically the same; this symbolizes the sameness within difference, the difference within sameness. Sameness and difference correspond to the 'heart of nirvana' (equanimity) and the 'knowledge of differentiation,' sometimes referred to as successive stages on the Ch'an path. It is this latter that is in the sphere of 'meeting another.'
- d. Kuan Nan Tao Wu, while on his foot travels, once heard a shamaness in a village spirit shrine take up her sceptre and intone her pledge to the spirit; at one point she said, 'Do you know the spirit or not?' whereupon Tao Wu was greatly enlightened. After travelling around to various places, he came to Kuan Nan Tao Ch'ang; to show his realization, Tao Wu flourished a sceptre, whereupon Tao Ch'ang recognized his enlightenment.
- e. Shih Kung, a successor of Ma Tsu, was formerly a hunter. Later, he used to draw his bow on those who came to ask about Ch'an. When San P'ing came to him, he drew his bow; San P'ing bared his breast and said, 'Is this a killing arrow or a life-giving arrow?' Shih Kung threw away his bow and said that after thirty years he had finally managed to shoot half a sage.
- f. This phrase also conveys the sense, 'his real point is distinct.'

# Yun Men's Appropriate Statement

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "What are the teachings of a whole lifetime?"<sup>1</sup>

Yun Men said, "An appropriate statement."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. Even up till now they're not finished with. The lecturer does not understand; he's in the cave of entangling complications.
2. An iron hammerhead with no handle-hole. A profuse outburst. A rat gnawing on raw ginger.

## COMMENTARY

Members of the Ch'an family, if you want to know the meaning of Buddha-nature, you must observe times and seasons, causes and conditions. This is called the special transmission outside the (written) teachings, the sole transmission of the mind seal, directly pointing to the human mind for the perception of nature and realization of Buddhahood.

For forty-nine years old Shakyamuni stayed in the world; at three hundred and sixty assemblies he expounded the sudden and the gradual, the temporary and the true. These are what is called the teachings of a whole lifetime.<sup>a</sup> The monk (in this case) picked this out to ask, "What are the teachings of a whole lifetime?" Why didn't Yun Men explain for him in full detail, but instead said to him, "An appropriate statement"?

As usual, within one sentence of Yun Men three sentences are bound to be present. These are called the sentence that encloses heaven and earth, the sentence that follows the waves, and the sentence that cuts off the myriad streams. He lets go and gathers up; he's naturally extraordinary, like cut-

ting nails or shearing through iron. He makes people unable to comprehend him or figure him out. The whole great treasure-house of the teachings just comes down to three words ("An appropriate statement"); there is no facet or aspect in which you can rationalize this.

People often misunderstand and say, "Buddha's preaching was appropriate to the conditions of one time." Or they say, "The multitude of appearances and myriad forms are all the impressions of a single truth,"<sup>b</sup> and call this "an appropriate statement." Then there are those who say, "It's just talking about that one truth." What connection is there? Not only do they not understand, they also enter hell as fast as an arrow flies. They are far from knowing that the meaning of that man of old is not like this.

Therefore it is said, "Shattering one's bones and crushing one's body is still not sufficient recompense; when a single phrase is understood, you transcend ten billion." Undeniably extraordinary: "What are the teachings of a whole lifetime?" just boils down to his saying, "An appropriate statement." If you can grasp this immediately, then you can return home and sit in peace. If you can't get it, then listen humbly to the verdict:

VERSE

*An appropriate statement;*

*\*\*Leaping with life.*

*The words are still in our ears.*

*Undeniably unique and lofty.\**

*How utterly unique!*

*\*\*The onlooker has some part in it.*

*Why only stand like a mile high wall?*

*Is there any such thing!\**

*He wedges a stake into the iron hammerhead with no hole.*

*\*\*He misunderstands the words. Old Yun Men too is washing a lump of dirt in the mud; Hsueh Tou also is just pasting on ornaments.\**

*Under the Jambu Tree I'm laughing; ha, ha!*

*\*\*This fellow has never been seen anywhere.*

*Only those on the same path would know.  
How many people could there be who know! \**

*Last night the black dragon had his horn wrenched off:  
\*\*It's not just the black dragon who gets twisted  
and broken. Has anyone seen? Do you have proof?  
Dumb! \**

*Exceptional, exceptional—*

*\*\*Ample praise; it takes Hsueh Tou to do this.  
Where is he exceptional! \**

*The old man of Shao Yang got one horn.<sup>c</sup>  
\*\*Where is it? To whom is the other  
horn given? Te Shan and Lin Chi too  
must fall back three thousand miles.  
Again, what about that other horn? I strike! \**

#### COMMENTARY

"An appropriate statement; how utterly unique!" Hsueh Tou cannot praise him enough. These words of Yun Men are independent and free, unique and lofty, prior to light and after annihilation. They are like an overhanging cliff ten thousand fathoms high. Then, too, they are like a million man battle line; there is no place for you to get in. It's just that it's too solitary and perilous.

An Ancient said, "If you want to attain intimacy, don't use a question to ask a question; the question is in the answer and the answer is in the point of the question." Of course it's solitary and steep, but tell me, where is it that it's solitary and steep? No one on earth can do anything about it.

This monk (in the case) was also an adept, and that is why he could question like this. And Yun Men too answered this way, much like "wedging a stake into the iron hammerhead with no hole." Hsueh Tou employs literary language so artfully! "Under the Jambu Tree I'm laughing; ha, ha!" In the *Scripture on the Creation of the World* it says, "On the south side of Sumeru a crystal tree shines over the continent of Jambu, making all in between a clear blue color. This continent takes its name from this great tree; hence it is called Jambudvipa. This tree is seven thousand leagues high; beneath it are the golden



mounds of the Jambu altar, which is twenty leagues high. Since gold is produced from beneath the tree, it is called the Jambu tree."

Thus Hsueh Tou says of himself that he is under the Jambu tree laughing out loud. But tell me, what is he laughing at? He's laughing at the black dragon who last night got his horn wrenched off. He's just looking up respectfully; he can only praise Yun Men. When Yun Men says, "An appropriate statement," what's it like? It's like breaking off one of the black dragon's horns. At this point, if there were no such thing, how could he have spoken as he did?

Hsueh Tou has finished his verse all at once, but he still has something to say at the very end: "Exceptional, exceptional—the old man of Shao Yang got one horn." Why doesn't Hsueh Tou say he got them both? How is it that he just got one horn? Tell me, where is the other horn?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. According to the analysis of Chih I, founder of the T'ien T'ai school of Chinese Buddhism, Buddha's teaching was divided into five periods: first, the period of the Hua Yen (Avatamsaka) scripture, where the Buddha directly expressed his own realization under the tree of enlightenment. Second, since no one at the time could understand the first, he expounded the Agamas for twelve years to suit elementary capacities. Third, he preached a transitional stage from this lesser to the greater vehicle, known as the extensive, or universally equal scriptures. Fourth, he preached the transcendence of wisdom. Fifth, he preached the Lotus of Truth (Saddharmapundarika) and Great Decease (Mahaparinirvana) scriptures. The teaching is divided by the Hua Yen school into the lesser vehicle, the elementary greater vehicle, the final greater vehicle, the sudden teaching, and the round, or complete teaching.
- b. This saying comes from the *Dhammapada*; Yun Men's reply can be read as 'teaching in reference to one.'
- c. The old man of Shao Yang is Yun Men. The horn is the stake driven into the holeless hammerhead. A hammerhead without a hole is an image used for something into which the 'handle' of logic and reason cannot be fit.

## Yun Men's Upside-Down Statement

### POINTER

The single-edged sword that kills people, the double-edged sword that brings people to life; the customary rule of high antiquity is still the pivotal essential for today. But tell me, right now, which is the sword that kills people, which is the sword that brings people to life? To test, I cite this; look!

### CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "When it's not the present intellect and it's not the present phenomena, what is it?"<sup>1,a</sup>

Yun Men said, "An upside-down statement."<sup>2</sup>

### NOTES

1. Why the leaping about? Fall back three thousand miles.
2. They come out even. Truth comes out of the convict's mouth; he can't be let go. He stretches out his body in the wild weeds.

### COMMENTARY

This monk is unquestionably an adept, to know how to pose questions like this. The question by the monk in the previous case is called "asking for more instruction"; in the present case it is a question to demonstrate understanding, and it can also be called a question with a concealed barb. For anyone but Yun Men, there would have been no way to cope with this monk. Yun Men possesses such ability that he cannot but reply once the question is raised. Why? An expert teaching master is like a bright mirror on its stand; if a foreigner comes a foreigner is reflected, and if a native comes a native is reflected.

An Ancient said, "If you want to attain intimate understanding, don't use a question to ask a question. Why? Because the answer is where the question is." Since when have the sages from past times ever had anything to give to people? Where is there Ch'an or Tao that can be given to you? If you don't do hellish deeds, naturally you will not bring on hellish results. If you don't create heavenly conditions, naturally you won't receive heavenly rewards. All circumstances of activity are self-made and self-received. The Ancient Yun Men clearly tells you, "When we discuss this affair, it's not in the words and phrases. If it were in words and phrases, doesn't the twelve part canon of the three vehicles have words and phrases? Then what further use would there be for the Patriarch's coming from the West?"

In the previous case Yun Men said, "An appropriate statement." Here, on the other hand, he says, "An upside-down statement." Since there's only a difference of a single word, why then are there a thousand differences, ten thousand distinctions? Tell me, where is the confusion? This is why it is said, "The Teaching is carried out according to facts; the banner of the Teaching is set up according to the situation."

"When it's not the present intellect and it's not the present phenomena, what is it?" is just worth a nod of agreement. Since Yun Men is a fellow with eyes, he can't be fooled one little bit. Since the point of the question was abstruse and misleading, the answer too had to be this way. In fact Yun Men is riding the thief's horse in pursuit of the thief.

Some people mistakenly say, "Basically these are words of a host, but it was a guest who spoke them; therefore Yun Men said, 'An upside-down statement.'" What relevance does this have?

This monk asked well, "When it's not the present intellect and it's not the present phenomena, what is it?" Why didn't Yun Men answer him with some other words? Why instead did he just say to him, "An upside-down statement"? Yun Men at once demolished him utterly. Still, to say "an upside-down statement" at this point is to gouge out a wound in healthy flesh. Why? "The emergence of tracks of words is the source from which divergent opinions are born." Suppose there never were words and phrases; have this pillar and lamp right here ever had any words or phrases? Do you understand? If you don't

understand at this point, you still need to turn over before you will know where the ultimate point of this is.

## VERSE

*An upside-down statement:*

*\*\*Can't let it go. Mixed up. He wraps up all five thousand and forty-eight volumes of the canon.\**

*Dividing one token,*

*\*\*Part on your side, part on my side.*

*Half south of the river, half north of the river.*

*Walking together holding hands.\**

*Dying with you, being born with you, to give you certainty.*

*\*\*Washing a lump of dirt in the mud. For what reason? He won't let you go.\**

*The eighty-four thousand disciples of Buddha were not phoenix feathers;*

*\*\*They looked like feathers. He diminishes these people's grandeur too much. Lacquer buckets are as plentiful as hemp and millet.\**

*Thirty-three men entered the tiger's den.*

*\*\*Only I can know. A single general is hard to find. A band of wild fox spirits.\**

*Distinctly outstanding—*

*\*\*How is it exceptional? A little boasting. Skip and leap as you will.\**

*The moon in the churning rushing water.*

*\*\*Under the blue sky and bright sun, he mistakes the reflection for the head. Why so busy?\**

## COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou too is undeniably an adept. Right under the first line he immediately says, "Dividing one token." Clearly he lets go of the ultimate and joins hands with Yun Men to walk along together with him. Hsueh Tou has always had the technique of letting go; he dares to enter the mud and water for your sake, to die and be born together with you. This is the

reason Hsueh Tou praises Yun Men this way. In reality he has no other purpose than to melt the glue and untie the bonds for you, to pull out the nails and wrench out the pegs.

These days, however, people base themselves on his words to spin out intellectual interpretations. Just as Yen T'ou said, "Although Hsueh Feng was born of the same lineage as me, he does not die of the same lineage as me." If Yun Men were not someone whose whole capacity had penetrated through to liberation, how could he die with you and be born with you? Why can he do this? Because he is free from the many leaking points of gain and loss, of is and is not.

Thus Tung Shan said, "If you would judge whether one going beyond is genuine or false, there are three kinds of leakage: emotional leakage, leakage of views, and verbal leakage. If there is leakage of views, the intellect does not stir from its fixed position and falls into the poisonous sea. If feelings leak, knowing always turns towards and against, and one's view is biased. Verbal leakage embodies the marvel but loses the fundamental; the intellect confuses beginning and end. You should know these three leaks for yourself."

There are also three mysteries; the mystery within the essence, the mystery within the phrase, and the mystery within the mystery.<sup>b</sup> When the Ancients came into this realm, their whole capacity was fully used: if you happened to be born, they would be born together with you; if you happened to die, they would die with you. They stretched out their bodies in the tiger's mouth; letting go their hands and feet, they would follow your lead for a thousand miles, for ten thousand miles. Why? You must go back with them to get this one realization before you'll understand.

As for "Eighty-four thousand disciples of Buddha were not phoenix feathers," this is the assembly of eighty-four thousand holy people on Vulture Peak of Spirit Mountain—they were not phoenix feathers.<sup>c</sup> The *Southern History* relates that in Sung times (420-479) there lived Hsieh Ch'ao-tsung ("surpassing his clan"), a man of Yang Hsia in Ch'en prefecture, the son of Hsieh Feng ("phoenix"). He had studied widely and his literary talent was superlative. At court there was no one to equal him; his contemporaries considered him unique. Since he was skilled in the written word, he served as permanent attendant at the capital. For the funeral ceremonies of the king's mother Yinshu, Ch'ao-tsung composed a eulogy and presented it at

court. Emperor Wu saw what he had written and praised him highly, saying, "Ch'ao-tsung does indeed have phoenix feathers!" An old poem says,

*Audiences over, the incense smoke fills his billowing sleeves;  
In the perfection of a poem, the perfect jewel lies in the stroke of his brush tip.  
If you want to know the excellence of the hereditary managers of Imperial decrees,  
On the pond right now there's a phoenix feather floating.*

In ancient times, at the assembly on Spirit Mountain, the four groups (monks, nuns, men and women devotees) had gathered like clouds. The World Honored One held up a flower; Kashyapa alone changed his expression with a smile. The others did not know his meaning. Taking this, Hsueh Tou says, "The eighty-four thousand were not phoenix feathers; thirty-three men entered the tiger's den."

Ananda asked Kashyapa, "The World Honored One bequeathed to you his golden robe; what special teaching did he transmit besides?" Kashyapa called out "Ananda!" Ananda responded. Then Kashyapa said, "Take down the banner pole in front of the gate."<sup>d</sup> Thereafter it was handed on from patriarch to patriarch, in India and this country, through thirty-three men. All had the ability to enter the tiger's den. The Ancients said, "If you don't enter the tiger's den, how can you catch a tiger cub?" Yun Men is this kind of man, well able to accompany people through birth and death. To help people, a teacher of our school must get to be like this, to sit in the carved wood seat of the teachers; abandoned, he makes you break open and lets you grab the tiger's whiskers. He must have reached such a realm to be able to teach. He has the seven things<sup>e</sup> always with him, so he can accompany (beings) through life and death. The high he presses down, the low he uplifts; to those who lack he gives. Those on the solitary peak he rescues and sends them into the wild weeds; if they have fallen into the wild weeds, he rescues them and puts them on the solitary peak. "If you enter a molten cauldron or a fiery furnace, I too will enter the molten cauldron and the fiery furnace." In reality there is no other purpose, just to melt the sticking points and release the bonds for you, to pull out nails and draw out pegs, to strip off the

blinders, to unload the saddle bags. Master P'ing T'ien had a most excellent verse:

*Spiritual light undimmed,  
Ages of good advice.  
Once it comes through this door,  
Don't keep any intellectual understanding.*

"Distinctly outstanding—the moon in the churning rushing water." Hsueh Tou unfailingly has a way to show himself, and also the skill to bring people to life. Hsueh Tou has picked this out to get people to go themselves to awaken their living potential. Don't follow another's words; if you follow them, that indeed would be the moon in the churning rushing water. Right now, how will you find peace and security? Let go!

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The monk in this case is supposed to be the same as in the fourteenth; the teachings of the age are devised and established according to the state of the intellect and total capacity of the hearers, in terms of the phenomenal situation. In an immediate sense, the present intellect and phenomena mean perceiver and perceived; according to Tenkei, the monk had seen that there is nothing outside of mind, and that all things are empty.
- b. Also translated as three profundities, this was a classification of the Lin Chi school, interpreted variously through the ages. The mystery within the essence corresponds to the phrase that encloses heaven and earth; the mystery within the phrase corresponds to the phrase that follows the waves; the mystery within the mystery corresponds to the phrase that cuts off myriad streams. Yun Men's replies are said to contain all three of these aspects.
- c. Phoenix feather is a metaphor for someone of outstanding talent, and also for a worthy successor.
- d. The banner in front of a monastery in India signaled that teaching and debate were going on therein (see the commentary to case 13).
- e. The seven items of a teacher are 1) great capacity and great function 2) swiftness of intellect 3) wondrous spirituality of speech 4) the active edge to kill or give life 5) wide learning and broad experience 6) clarity of mirroring awareness 7) freedom to appear and disappear.

# Ching Ch'ing's Man in the Weeds

## POINTER

The Path has no byroads; one who stands upon it is solitary and dangerous.<sup>a</sup> The truth is not seeing or hearing; words and thoughts are far removed from it. If you can penetrate through the forest of thorns and untie the bonds of Buddhahood and Patriarchy, you attain the land of inner peace, where all the gods have no way to offer flowers, where outsiders have no gate to spy through. Then you work all day without ever working, talk all day without ever talking; then you can unfold the device of 'breaking in and breaking out' and use the double-edged sword that kills and brings to life, with freedom and independence.

Even if you are this way, you must also know that within the gate of provisional expedients, there is 'one hand uplifting, one hand pressing down'; yet this still only amounts to a little bit: as for the fundamental matter, this has nothing to do with it. What about the fundamental matter? To test, I cite this; look!

## CASE

A monk asked Ching Ch'ing, "I am breaking out; I ask the Teacher to break in."<sup>1</sup>

Ching Ch'ing said, "Can you live or not?"<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "If I weren't alive, I'd be laughed at by people."<sup>3</sup>

Ching Ch'ing said, "You too are a man in the weeds."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. Why raise waves where there's no wind? What do you want with so many views?



2. A jab. He buys the hat to fit the head. He adds error to error. Everyone can't be this way.
3. He drags others into it. He's holding up the sky and supporting the earth; the board-carrying fellow!
4. After all. Take what's coming to you and get out. He can't be let go.

## COMMENTARY

Ching Ch'ing was a successor of Hsueh Feng, and a contemporary of the likes of Pen Jen, Hsuan Sha, Su Shan, and Fu of T'ai Yuan. First he met Hsueh Feng and understood his message. Thereafter he always used 'breaking in and breaking out' devices to instruct later students. He was well able to expound the teaching according to the potentialities of his listeners.

Once Ching Ch'ing taught the community saying, "In general, foot-travelers must have the 'simultaneous breaking in and breaking out' eye and must have the 'simultaneous breaking in and breaking out' function; only then can they be called patchrobed monks. It's like when the mother hen wants to break in, the chick must break out, and when the chick wants to break out, the mother hen must break in."

Thereupon a monk came forward and asked, "When the mother hen breaks in and the chick breaks out, from the standpoint of the teacher, what does this amount to?" Ching Ch'ing said, "Good news." The monk asked, "When the chick breaks out and the mother hen breaks in, from the standpoint of the student, what does this amount to?" Ching Ch'ing said, "Revealing his face." From this we see that they did have the device of 'simultaneous breaking in and breaking out' in Ching Ch'ing's school.

This monk (in the case) was also a guest of his house, and understood (Ching Ch'ing's) household affairs; therefore he questioned like this: "I am breaking out; I ask the Teacher to break in." Within the Ts'ao-Tung tradition this is called using phenomena to illustrate one's condition. How so? When the chick breaks out and the mother breaks in, naturally they are perfectly simultaneous.

Ching Ch'ing too does well; we could say his fists and feet are coordinated, his mind and eye illumine each other. He an-

swered immediately by saying, "Can you live or not?" The monk too does well; he also knows how to change with the circumstances. In this one sentence of Ching Ch'ing's there is guest and there is host, there is illumination and there is function, there is killing and there is giving life.

The monk said, "If I weren't alive, I'd be laughed at by people." Ching Ch'ing said, "You too are a man in the weeds." He's first class at going into the mud and water, but nothing stops his wicked hands and feet. Since the monk understood enough to question in this way, why did Ching Ch'ing nevertheless say, "You too are a man in the weeds"? Because the eye of an adept must be this way, like sparks struck from stone, like flashing lightning. Whether you can reach it or not, you won't avoid losing your body and life. If you are this way, then you see Ching Ch'ing calling him a man in the weeds.

Therefore Nan Yuan taught his assembly saying, "In the various places they only have the eye of simultaneous breaking in and breaking out, but they don't have the function of simultaneous breaking in and breaking out." A monk came forward and asked, "What is the function of simultaneous breaking in and breaking out?" Nan Yuan said, "An adept does not break in and break out; breaking in and breaking out are both at once error." The monk said, "This is still doubtful to me." Nan Yuan said, "What are you in doubt about?" The monk said, "Error." Thereupon Nan Yuan struck him; the monk did not agree, so Nan Yuan drove him out.

Later this monk went to Yun Men's community, where he brought up the previous conversation. There was a monk who said, "Did Nan Yuan's staff break?" The first monk was greatly awakened. But tell me, where is the meaning? This monk returned to see Nan Yuan, but since Nan Yuan had already passed on, he saw Feng Hsueh instead. As soon as he bowed, Feng Hsueh asked, "Aren't you the monk who was asking our late teacher about the simultaneous breaking in and breaking out?" The monk said, "That's right." Feng Hsueh asked, "What was your understanding at that time?" The monk said, "At first it was as if I were walking in the light of a lamp." Feng Hsueh said, "You've understood." But say, what principle is this? This monk came and just said, "At first it was as if I were walking in the light of a lamp." Why did Feng Hsueh immediately tell him, "You've understood"?

Later Ts'ui Yen commented, "Although Nan Yuan puts his

plans into operation from within his tent, nevertheless the country is vast, the people are few, and sympathizers are rare." Feng Hsueh commented, "At the time Nan Yuan should have hit him right across the back the moment he opened his mouth, to see what he would do." If you see this public case, then you see where the monk and Ching Ch'ing met each other. How will all of you avoid Ching Ch'ing calling you a man in the weeds? For this reason Hsueh Tou likes his saying "man in the weeds," so he presents it in verse:

## VERSE

*The Ancient Buddhas had a family style;*

*\*\*The words are still in our ears. The model for all time.  
Don't slander old Shakyamuni.\**

*Responsive preaching comes to scornful detraction*

*\*\*Why are your nostrils in my hand? Eight blows pays for  
thirteen. What about you? He lets the initiative go, so I'll  
strike.\**

*Chick and mother hen do not know each other;*

*\*\*Since they don't know each other, why then  
do they naturally break in and break out?\**

*Who is it that breaks in and breaks out together?*

*\*\*Shattered in a hundred fragments. (Hsueh Tou) has the  
kindness of an old granny; but don't misunderstand.\**

*A peck, and he awakens;*

*\*\*What are you saying? You've fallen into the second-  
ary.\**

*But he's still in the shell.*

*\*\*Why doesn't he stick his head out?\**

*Once again he receives a blow;*

*\*\*Wrong! I strike! A double case; triple, quadruple.\**

*All the patchrobed monks in the world name and describe it  
in vain.*

*\*\*He has let go; he needn't bring it up. Is there anyone  
who can name or describe it? If there is, he too is a  
man in the weeds. From remote antiquity, the dark-  
ness is vast and boundless; it fills the channels and  
clogs the gullies. No one understands.\**

## COMMENTARY

With the one line "The Ancient buddhas had a family style," Hsueh Tou has completed his verse. Whoever sticks his head out simply won't be able to approach. If you do approach, you'll fall off a cliff ten thousand miles high. As soon as you come out, you've fallen into the weeds. Even if you can go freely in all directions, it wouldn't be worth a pinch.

Hsueh Tou says, "The Ancient buddhas had a family style." It's not just right now that this is so; when old Shakyamuni was first born, he pointed to the sky with one hand and to the earth with the other hand, scanned the four directions and said, "In the heavens and on earth, I alone am the Honored One." Yun Men said, "If I had seen him then, I would have struck him dead with one blow and fed him to the dogs, hoping that there would be peace in the world." Only by being like this can one reply appropriately. Thus, devices of breaking in and breaking out are all in the family tradition of the Ancient Buddhas.

If you can attain to this Path, then you'll be able to knock down a mountain fortress with one blow of your fist, you'll be able to topple a cliff-top temple with a single kick. It's like a great mass of fire; approach it, and it will burn off your face. It's like the T'ai Ya Sword; fool around with it and you lose your body and life. For this one, only those who have penetrated through and gained the great liberation will be able to act like this. Otherwise, if you miss the source and get stuck in the words, you definitely won't be able to grasp this kind of talk.

"Responsive preaching comes to scornful detraction." This then is 'one guest, one host, one question, one answer.' Right in the asking and answering, there's the scornful detraction. It's called "responsive preaching comes to scornful detraction." Hsueh Tou has deep knowledge of this matter, so he can complete his verse in only two lines.

At the end it's just Hsueh Tou going down into the weeds to explain things thoroughly for you. "Chick and mother hen do not know each other; who is it that breaks in and breaks out together?" Although the mother hen breaks in, she cannot cause the chick to break out; although the chick breaks out, he cannot cause the mother hen to break in. Neither is aware of the other. At the moment of breaking in and breaking out, who is it that breaks in and breaks out together?

If you understand this way, you still haven't been able to get

beyond Hsueh Tou's final line. Why? Haven't you heard Hsiang Yen's saying,

*The chick breaks out, the mother hen breaks in—  
When the chick awakens, there is no shell.  
Chick and hen both forgotten,  
Response to circumstance is unerring.  
On the same path, chanting in harmony,  
Through the marvelous mystery, walking alone.*

Nevertheless Hsueh Tou comes down into the weeds and creates entangling complications by saying, "A peck." This one word praises Ching Ch'ing's answer, "Can you live or not?" "He awakens" praises the monk's reply, "If I weren't alive, I'd be laughed at by people." Why then does Hsueh Tou go ahead and say, "He's still in the shell"? Hsueh Tou can distinguish initiated from uninitiated in the light of a stone-struck spark; he can discern the clue to the whole thing in the flash of a lightening bolt.

Ching Ch'ing said, "You too are a man in the weeds." Hsueh Tou says, "Once again he receives a blow." This difficult part is correct. Ching Ch'ing said, "You too are a man in the weeds." Can this be called snatching the man's eyeballs away? Doesn't this line mean he's still in the shell? But this has nothing to do with it. How so? If you don't understand, you can travel on foot all over the world and still not be able to requite your debt. When I talk like this, I too am a man in the weeds.

"All the patchrobed monks in the world name and describe it in vain." Who doesn't name and describe? At this point, Hsueh Tou himself cannot name or describe it, yet he drags in others, the patchrobed monks of the world. But tell me, how did Ching Ch'ing help this monk? No patchrobed monk in the world can leap out.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Expressions such as 'solitary and steep,' 'solitary and dangerous (high)' are used to describe the method of an adept who is bringing up 'the true imperative,' likened to a steep and precipitous mountain peak which is unapproachable, offering no hand or foot hold, nothing to grasp. It is dangerous because if you approach you may lose your life.

# Hsiang Lin's Meaning of the Coming from the West

## POINTER

Cut through nails and shear through iron, then you can be a genuine master of our school. If you run away from arrows and avoid swords, how could you possibly be a competent adept? The place where even a needle cannot enter, I leave aside for now; but tell me, what's it like when the foamy waves are flooding the skies? To test, I cite this; look!

## CASE

A monk asked Hsiang Lin, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"<sup>1</sup>

Hsiang Lin said, "Sitting for a long time becomes toilsome."<sup>2,a</sup>

## NOTES

1. There have been many people with doubts about this; there is still news of this around.
2. When a fish swims through, the water is muddied; when a bird flies by, feathers drop down. Better shut that dog's mouth. The eye of an adept. A saw cutting apart a scale beam.<sup>b</sup>

## COMMENTARY

Hsiang Lin says, "Sitting for a long time becomes toilsome." Understand? If you do understand, then you can put down your shield and spear on the hundred grasses. If you don't understand, then listen humbly to this treatment.

When the Ancients travelled on foot, forming associations with chosen friends to travel together as companions on the Path, they would pull out the weeds and look for the way. At the time Yun Men was causing the teaching to flourish throughout Kuang Nan. Hsiang Lin had made his way by stages out of Shu (Ssuchuan). He was contemporary with E Hu and Ching Ch'ing. He first went to Pao Tz'u Temple in Hunan; only later did he come to Yun Men's congregation, where he was an attendant for eighteen years.

At Yun Men's place he personally attained and personally heard; though the time of his enlightenment was late, nevertheless he was a man of great faculties. He stayed at Yun Men's side for eighteen years; time and again Yun Men would just call out to him, "Attendant Yuan!" As soon as he responded, Yun Men would say, "What is it?" At such times, no matter how much (Hsiang Lin) spoke to present his understanding and gave play to his spirit, he never reached mutual accord (with Yun Men). One day, though, he suddenly said, "I understand." Yun Men said, "Why don't you say something above and beyond this?" Hsiang Lin stayed on for another three years. Yun Men's eloquent elucidations of states uttered in his room were mostly so that Attendant Yuan could enter in actively wherever he was. Whenever Yun Men had some saying or remark, they were all gathered by Attendant Yuan.<sup>c</sup>

Later Hsiang Lin returned to Shu, where he stayed at the Crystal Palace Temple on Ch'ing Ch'eng Mountain.

Master Chih Men Tso was originally from Chekiang. Filled with what he had heard of Hsiang Lin teaching the Path, he came especially to Shu to meet him and pay homage. Tso was Hsueh Tou's master. Though Yun Men converted people without number, of all the wayfarers of that generation, Hsiang Lin's stream flourished most. After he came back to Shu, he lived in temples (teaching) for forty years; he didn't pass on until he was eighty. He once said, "Only when I was forty did I attain unity."

Ordinarily he would teach his assembly saying, "Whenever you go travelling on foot to search for men of knowledge, you must bring along the eye to distinguish initiate from uninitiate, to tell shallow from deep, then you'll be all right. First you must establish your resolve, just as old man Shakyamuni did when he was in the causal ground; wherever he thought or spoke, it was always to set his resolve."

Later a monk asked, "What is the saucer-lamp within the room?"<sup>d</sup> Lin said, "If three people testify that it's a turtle, then it's a turtle." Again he asked, "What is the affair underneath the patched robe?" Lin said, "The conflagration of the end of time burns up the mountain."

Since the old days, very many answers have been given for the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West. Only Hsiang Lin, right here in this case, has cut off the tongues of everyone on earth; there is no place for you to calculate or make up rationalizations. The monk asked, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Lin said, "Sitting for a long time becomes toilsome." This could be called flavorless words, flavorless phrases; flavorless talk blocks off people's mouths and leaves you no place to show your energy. If you would see, then just see immediately. If you don't see, it's urgent you avoid entertaining intellectual understanding.

Hsiang Lin had encountered an adept; consequently he possessed Yun Men's technique and harmonious mastery of the 'three phrases' (of Yun Men). People often misunderstand and say, "The Patriarch came from the West and sat facing a wall for nine years; isn't this sitting for a long time and becoming weary?" What is there to hold on to? They don't see that the Ancient Hsiang Lin had attained the realm of great independence, that his feet tread upon the real earth; without so many views and theories of Buddha Dharma, he could meet the situation and function accordingly. As it is said, "The Teaching is carried on according to facts; the banner of the Teaching is set up according to the situation."

Hsueh Tou uses this wind to fan the fire, and from his position as a bystander points out one or a half:

#### VERSE

*One, two, a thousand, ten thousand;*

*\*\*Why not practice accordingly?*

*As plentiful as hemp and millet;*

*why are they congregating into a crowd?\**

*Strip off the blinders, unload the saddle bags.*

*\*\*From today on, you must be purified, clean*

*and at ease. Can you rest yet, or not?\**



*Turning to the left, turning to the right, following up behind;  
 \*\*You still can't let yourself go. Reflections upon reflections,  
 echoes upon echoes. I strike!\**

*Tzu Hu had to hit Iron Grindstone Liu.*

*\*\*I'd break the staff and no longer carry  
 out this order. He draws his bow after  
 the thief has gone, so I strike. Danger!\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou strikes directly, like sparks struck from stone, like the brilliance of a flash of lightening; he presses out and releases to get you to see, which you can do only if you understand it immediately as soon as you hear it being brought up.

Undeniably Hsueh Tou is a descendant of Hsiang Lin's house; thus he is able to talk this way. If you can directly and immediately understand in this way, then nothing can stop you from being extraordinary.

"One, two, a thousand, ten thousand; strip off the blinders, unload the saddle bags." Purified, clean and at ease, they are not stained by birth and death, they are not bound by emotional interpretations of sanctity and profanity. Above, there's nothing to look to for support; below, they've cut off their personal selves. They're just like Hsiang Lin and Hsueh Tou; how could there be just a thousand or ten thousand? In fact all the people in the world, each and every one, are all like this. The past and future Buddhas are all like this too.

If you make up interpretative understandings on the words, then this is like "Tzu Hu had to hit Iron Grindstone Liu." In fact, as soon as (such interpretations) are raised, Hsueh Tou strikes while you are still speaking. Tzu Hu studied under Nan Ch'uan; he was a fellow student of Chao Chou and Tiger Ts'en (Ch'ang Sha). At that time Iron Grindstone Liu had set up a hut on Mt. Kuei. People from all over couldn't cope with her. One day Tzu Hu came proudly to call on her; he asked, "You're Iron Grindstone Liu, aren't you?" The Grindstone said, "I don't presume (to say so)." Hu asked, "Do you turn to the left or turn to the right?" The Grindstone said, "Don't tip over, Teacher." Hu struck her while her words were still in the air.

Answering the monk who asked, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Hsiang Lin said, "Sit-

ting for a long time becomes toilsome." If you understand this way, you are "turning to the left, turning to the right, following up behind." But tell me, what is Hsueh Tou's meaning in verifying like this?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Hsiang Lin's reply could also be glossed as "sitting for a long time becomes tiring," or "sitting for a long time becomes hard work." Tenkei said, "When you sit for a long time your legs hurt: it's nothing special—the eyes are horizontal, the nose vertical; though everyone knows, because they are not aware of it (Hsiang Lin) just lets everyone know that they breathe through their noses. Is there any patriarch's meaning in there? If you call it an answer as to the meaning of the coming from the West, it's a worthless bag, a worn-out loincloth." A popular legend has it that Bodhidharma's legs crumbled to dust as he sat still for nine years facing a wall at the Shao Lin monastery. Dogen said that the Way is actually realized by the body. This *kung an* should not be applied to person only, but also to things. The "ground of reality" which one must tread to see this case could also be glossed as "real earth" from a certain point of view.
- b. According to commentators, this means that it is hard to penetrate.
- c. It is said that Yun Men forbade the recording of his words; however, Hsiang Lin stealthily wrote them down on his paper robe. They were compiled by Shou Chien, another of Yun Men's successors.
- d. The lamp symbolizes wisdom; the room symbolizes stability. Without the stability of meditation, the flame of wisdom is blown by the wind of passion.

# National Teacher Chung's Seamless Monument

## CASE

Emperor Su Tsung<sup>1</sup> asked National Teacher Hui Chung, "After you die, what will you need?"<sup>2</sup>

The National Teacher said, "Build a seamless monument for me."<sup>3</sup>

The Emperor said, "Please tell me, Master, what the monument would look like."<sup>4</sup>

The National Teacher was silent for a long time; then he asked, "Do you understand?"<sup>5</sup>

The Emperor said, "I don't understand."<sup>6</sup>

The National Teacher said, "I have a disciple to whom I have transmitted the Teaching, Tan Yuan, who is well versed in this matter. Please summon him and ask him about it."<sup>7</sup>

After the National Teacher passed on,<sup>8</sup> the Emperor summoned Tan Yuan and asked him what the meaning of this was.<sup>9</sup> Tan Yuan said,

South of Hsiang, north of T'an;<sup>10</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "A single hand does not make random sound."<sup>11</sup>

In between there's gold sufficient to a nation.<sup>12</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "A rough-hewn staff."<sup>13</sup>

Beneath the shadowless tree, the community ferryboat;<sup>14</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "The sea is calm, the rivers are clear."<sup>15</sup>

Within the crystal palace, there's no one who knows.<sup>16</sup>

Hsueh Tou added the comment, "He has raised it up."<sup>17</sup>

## NOTES

1. This is a mistake; actually it was Tai Tsung.
2. He scratches before it itches. As it turns out, (Hui Chung) will create a model and draw a likeness; though great and venerable, he acts this way—he shouldn't point to the east as the west.<sup>a</sup>
3. It can't be grasped.
4. He gives (Chung) a good poke.
5. Confined in prison, he increases in wisdom. After all he points to the east as the west and takes the south as the north. All he can do is frown.
6. It's fortunate that he doesn't understand; if he had pressed (Chung) further at this time and made him gulp a mouthful of frost, then he would have gotten somewhere.
7. He's lucky that the Emperor did not overturn his meditation seat; why didn't (Chung) give him some of his own provisions? Don't confuse the man. (Chung) let the initiative go.
8. What a pity! After all (the Emperor) will mistakenly go by the zero point of the scale.
9. The son takes up the father's work. He too falls into the second level, into the third level.
10. This too can't be grasped. Two by two, three by three—what are you doing? Half open, half closed.
11. One blind man leading a crowd of blind men. After all (Hsueh Tou) is following his words to produce interpretations. Why follow falsehood and pursue evil?
12. Above is the sky, below is the earth. I've had no such news. Whose concern is this?
13. It's been broken. This too is creating a model and drawing a likeness.
14. The Patriarch has perished. What are you saying, Reverend?
15. When vast swells of expansive white waves flood the skies, this still only amounts to a little bit.
16. Bah!
17. He draws his bow after the thief has gone. The words are still in our ears.

## COMMENTARY

Su Tsung and Tai Tsung were both descendants of Hsuan Tsung. When they were princes, they were always fond of

studying meditation. Because there was a great upheaval in his realm,<sup>b</sup> Hsuan Tsung finally fled to Shu. The T'ang dynasty originally had its capital at Ch'ang An; but because it was occupied by An Lu Shan, later (the capital) was moved to Lo Yang.

When Su Tsung came to power, National Teacher Chung was dwelling in a hut on White Cliff Mountain in Teng Chou (in Hunan). Today this is the Fragrant Cliff (Hsiang Yen) monastery. Though he did not come down from the mountain for more than forty years, word of his practice of the Way reached the Imperial precincts. In 761 the Emperor Su Tsung sent his personal emissary to summon Chung to enter the Imperial palace (to teach). The Emperor treated Chung with the etiquette due a teacher, and greatly honored him. Chung once lectured on the Supreme Path for the Emperor. When the Master departed from court, the Emperor himself escorted his carriage and saw him off. The courtiers were all angry at this and wanted to make their displeasure known to the Emperor. But the National Teacher had the power to know the minds of others, so he saw the Emperor first and told him, "In the presence of Indra, I have seen Emperors scattered like grains, evanescent as a flash of lightning." The Emperor respected him even more after this.

When Tai Tsung succeeded to the throne (in 762) he again invited (Chung) to come to the Abode of Light Temple. Chung stayed in the capital for sixteen years, expounding the Dharma according to the occasion, until he passed on in 776.

Formerly the Master of Blue File Mountain in Shan Man Fu had been the National Teacher's travelling companion. The National Teacher once asked the Emperor to summon him to court, but he did not rise to three Imperial commands; he would always upbraid the National Teacher for being addicted to fame and fortune, and for liking the company of people.

Chung was National Teacher under two emperors, father and son. In that family father and son studied meditation at the same time. According to the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*, it was Tai Tsung who asked the questions in the present case. When the National Teacher was asked, "What is the Ten-Body Controller?" (case 99), this on the other hand was Su Tsung's question.

When the National Teacher's life was over and he was about to enter nirvana, he was taking leave of Tai Tsung. Tai Tsung

asked, "After your death,<sup>c</sup> what will you need?" This is just an ordinary question. The old fellow (Chung) stirred up waves where there was no wind and said, "Build a seamless monument for me." Under the bright sun and blue sky, why answer like this? It should have been enough to build a monument; why then did he say to build a seamless monument? But Tai Tsung too was an adept: he pressed him and said, "Please tell me, Master, what the monument would look like?" The National Teacher remained silent for a long time, then said, "Do you understand?" How extraordinary this little bit is; it's most difficult to approach. When pressed by the Emperor, the National Teacher, supposedly so great, could only frown. Although this is so, anyone but this old fellow (Chung) would probably have been bowled over.

Quite a few people say that the National Teacher's not speaking is itself what the monument is like. If you understand in this fashion, Bodhidharma and all his family would be wiped off the face of the earth. If you say that keeping silent is it, then mutes too must understand Ch'an.

Haven't you heard how an outsider asked the Buddha, "I don't ask about the spoken, I don't ask about the unspoken." The World Honored One remained silent. The outsider bowed in homage and sighed in praise; he said, "The World Honored One's great mercy and great compassion has dispersed the clouds of my delusions and caused me to gain entry." After the outsider had left, Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did the outsider witness, that he said he had gained entry?" The World Honored One said, "In worldly terms he's like a good horse; he goes when he sees the shadow of the whip." People often go to the silence for their understanding. What is there to grasp?

My late teacher Wu Tsu brought up (the 'seamless monument') and said, "In front it is pearls and agate, in back it is agate and pearls; on the east are Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, on the west are Manjusri and Samantabhadra;<sup>d</sup> in the middle there's a flag blown by the wind, saying 'Flap, flap.'"

The National Teacher asked, "Do you understand?" The Emperor said, "I don't understand," yet he had attained a little bit. But tell me, is this "I don't understand" the same as Emperor Wu's "I don't know" (case 1), or is it different? Although they seem the same, actually they're not.

The National Teacher said, "I have a disciple to whom I have transmitted the Teaching, Tan Yuan, who is well versed in this matter. Please summon him and ask him about it." Putting aside Tai Tsung's not understanding for the moment, did Tan Yuan understand? All that was needed was to say, "Please, Teacher, what would the monument look like?"—no one in the world can do anything about it. My late teacher Wu Tsu commented by saying, "You are the teacher of a whole nation; why is it that you don't speak, but instead defer to your disciple?"

After the National Teacher died, the Emperor summoned Tan Yuan, to ask about the meaning of this. Tan Yuan then came on behalf of the National Teacher and explained the principle with foreign words and native speech; naturally he understood what the National Teacher had said, and just needed a single verse (to explain):

*South of Hsiang, north of T'an:"  
Within there's gold sufficient to a nation.  
Beneath the shadowless tree, the community fer-  
ryboat;  
Within the crystal palace, there's no one who  
knows.*

Tan Yuan, whose name was Ying Chen, served as an attendant at the National Teacher's place. Later he dwelt at Tan Yuan Temple in Chi Chou (in Kiangsi). At this time Yang Shan came to see Tan Yuan. Tan Yuan's words were severe, his nature harsh and unapproachable. It was impossible to stay there, so at first Yang Shan went and saw the Ch'an master Hsing K'ung. There was a monk who asked Hsing K'ung, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Hsing K'ung said, "It's as if a man were down in a thousand foot deep well; if you could get this man out without using even an inch of rope, then I would tell you the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." The monk said, "These days Master Ch'ang of Hunan is talking this way and that for people too." Hsing K'ung then called to Yang Shan, "Novice, drag this corpse out of here!"

Later Yang Shan took this up with Tan Yuan and asked, "How can you get the man out of the well?" Tan Yuan said, "Bah! Ignoramus! Who is in the well?" Yang Shan didn't under-

stand. Later he asked Kuei Shan. Kuei Shan immediately called out (Yang Shan's name) "Hui Chi!" When Yang Shan responded, Kuei Shan said, "He's out." At this Yang Shan was greatly enlightened. He said, "At Tan Yuan's I attained the essence; at Kuei Shan's I attained the function."

As for this little verse of Tan Yuan's, it has led not a few people into false interpretations. People often misunderstand and say, "*Hsiang* is the *hsiang* of 'meet' (*hsiang-chien*); *T'an* is the *t'an* of 'discuss' (*t'an-lun*). In between there's a seamless memorial tower, hence the verse says, 'In between there's gold sufficient to a nation.' 'Beneath the shadowless tree, the community ferryboat' is the interchange between the National Teacher and the Emperor. The Emperor did not understand, so the verse says, 'Inside the crystal palace there's no one who knows.'"

Again, some say, "The first line means south of Hsiang Chou and north of T'an Chou; 'In between there's gold sufficient to a nation' praises the Emperor." Then they blink their eyes, look around, and say, "This is the seamless monument." If you understand in such a way, you have not gone beyond emotional views.

As for Hsueh Tou's four turning words, how will you understand them? People today are far from knowing the Ancient's meaning. Tell me, how do you understand "South of Hsiang, north of T'an"? How do you understand "Within there's gold sufficient to a nation"? How do you understand "Beneath the shadowless tree, the community ferryboat"? How do you understand "Within the crystal palace, there's no one who knows"? If you can see this as Hsueh Tou and I do, nothing can prevent a whole life of joy and happiness.

"South of Hsiang, north of T'an." Hsueh Tou says, "A single hand does not make a random sound." He couldn't but explain for you. "Within there's gold sufficient to a nation." Hsueh Tou says, "A rough-hewn staff." An Ancient said, "If you know the staff, the work of your whole life's study is complete." "Beneath the shadowless tree, the community ferry." Hsueh Tou says, "The sea is calm, the rivers are clear." Open the windows and doors all at once—on all sides gleaming clarity. "Inside the crystal palace, there's no one who knows." Hsueh Tou says, "He's raised it." After all he's gotten somewhere. Hsueh Tou has spoken clearly all at once; afterwards he simply eulogizes the seamless monument.



## VERSE

*The seamless monument—*

*\*\*How big is this one seam?*

*What are you saying?\**

*To see it is hard.*

*\*\*It's not something eyes can see.*

*Blind!\**

*A clear pool does not admit the blue dragon's coils.*

*\*\*Do you see? Great waves, vast, gigantic. Where  
will the blue dragon go to coil up? Here it just  
cannot be found.\**

*Layers upon layers.*

*\*\*No optical illusions! What are you doing,  
seeing optical illusions?\**

*Shadows upon shadows—*

*\*\*Your whole body is an eye. You  
fall into sevens and eights. Two by  
two, three by three, walking the old  
road; turning to the left, turning  
to the right, following up behind.\**

*For ever and ever it is shown to people.*

*\*\*Do you see? How will blind people see?  
Can you catch a glimpse of it, Reverend?\**

## COMMENTARY

Right off Hsueh Tou says, "The seamless monument—To see it is hard." Though it stands alone revealed with nothing hidden, when you want to see it, it's still hard to do so. Hsueh Tou is exceedingly compassionate, and tells you more: "A clear pool does not admit the blue dragon's coils." My late master Wu Tsu said, "In Hsueh Tou's whole volume of eulogies on the ancients, I just like the line, 'A clear pool does not admit the blue dragon's coils.'" Still, this amounts to something.

Quite a few people go to the National Teacher's silence for their sustenance; if you understand in this way, you at once go wrong. Haven't you heard it said, "Reclining dragons aren't to be seen in stagnant water; where they are not, there's moon-

light and the ripples settle, but where they are, waves arise without wind." Again, it was said, "Reclining dragons always fear the blue pool's clarity." As for this fellow Hsueh Tou, even if vast swelling billows of white waves flooded the sky, he still wouldn't coil up in there.

When Hsueh Tou gets to this, his verse is finished. Afterwards he applies a little bit of eye and carves a seamless monument. Following up behind he says, "Layers upon layers, Shadows upon shadows—For ever and ever it is shown to people." How will you look upon it? Where is it right now? Even if you see it clearly, don't mistakenly stick by the zero point of the scale.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The three clauses of this sentence can be taken in reference to the Emperor or to Hui Chung. In the original these notes of Yuan Wu's are inserted right in the text; though they usually refer to the preceding passage, occasionally they apply to the succeeding sentence. The pronoun 'he'—absent in the original but added by the translator for grammatical English—normally refers to the same subject as the clause noted. Commentators frequently point out that it applies to you too.
- b. In 755 the military man An Lushan, commander of powerful border armies on China's northern frontier, began a revolt aimed at supplanting the T'ang dynasty with his own regime. The fighting dragged on for more than five years, even after An Lushan himself had died, ravaging much of northern China, and dealing the ruling house of T'ang a blow from which it never fully recovered. Thereafter the sufferings of the people increased as rival military commanders struggled with each other and with the Imperial court for control of the revenues of the land. Hsuan Tsung fled from the capital Ch'ang An to the city of Ch'eng Tu in Szechuan (ancient Shu) in western China—a traditional route of flight before northern invaders.
- c. The polite expression used is "after a hundred years."
- d. Avalokitesvara represents compassion, Mahasthamaprapta represents empowerment, Manjusri represents wisdom and knowledge, and Samantabhadra represents goodness in all actions.
- e. Hsiang-T'an was a district in Hunan, south of Ch'ang Sha. "South of Hsiang and north of T'an" can mean everywhere, or nowhere.

# Chu Ti's One-Finger Ch'an

## POINTER

When one speck of dust arises, the great earth is contained therein; when a single flower blooms, the world arises. But before the speck of dust is raised, before the flower opens, how will you set eyes on it? Therefore it is said, "It's like cutting a skein of thread: when one strand is cut, all are cut. It's like dyeing a skein of thread: when one strand is dyed, all are dyed."

This very moment you should take all complications and cut them off. Bring out your own family jewels and respond everywhere, high and low, before and after, without missing. Each and every one will be fully manifest. If you're not yet like this, look into the text below.

## CASE

Whenever anything was asked,<sup>1</sup> Master Chu Ti would just raise one finger.<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. What news is there? Dull-witted teacher!
2. This old fellow too would cut off the tongues of everyone on earth. When it's warm, all heaven and earth are warm; when it's cold, all heaven and earth are cold. He snatches away the tongues of everyone on earth.

## COMMENTARY

If you understand at the finger, then you turn your back on Chu Ti; if you don't go to the finger to understand, then it's like cast iron. Whether you understand or not, Chu Ti still goes on this way; whether you're high or low, he still goes on this way;

whether you're right or wrong, he still goes on this way. Thus it is said, "As soon as a speck of dust arises, the great earth is contained therein; when a single flower is about to open, the world immediately comes into being. The lion on the tip of a single hair appears on the tips of ten billion hairs."

Yuan Ming said, "When it's cold, all throughout heaven and earth are cold; when it's warm, all throughout heaven and earth are warm." The mountains and rivers and the great earth reach down through the Yellow Springs (Hades); the myriad images and multitude of forms penetrate upward through the heavens. But tell me, what is so extraordinary? For those who know, it's not worth taking hold of; for those who don't know, it blocks them off utterly.

Master Chu Ti was from Chin Hua in Wu Chou (in Chekiang). During the time he first dwelt in a hermitage, there was a nun named Shih Chi ('Reality') who came to his hut. When she got there she went straight in; without taking off her rain hat she walked around his meditation seat three times holding her staff. "If you can speak," she said, "I'll take off my rain hat." She questioned him like this three times; Chu Ti had no reply. Then as she was leaving Chu Ti said, "The hour is rather late: would you stay the night?" The nun said, "If you can speak, I'll stay over." Again Chu Ti had no reply. The nun then walked out. Chu Ti sighed sorrowfully and said, "Although I inhabit the body of a man, still I lack a man's spirit." After this he aroused his zeal to clarify this matter.

He meant to abandon his hermitage and travel to various places to call on teachers to ask for instruction, and had wrapped up his things for foot-travelling. But that night the spirit of the mountain told him, "You don't have to leave this place. Tomorrow a flesh and blood bodhisattva will come and expound the truth for you, Master. You don't have to go." As it turned out, the following day Master T'ien Lung actually came to the hermitage. Chu Ti welcomed him ceremoniously and gave a full account of the previous events. T'ien Lung just lifted up one finger to show him; suddenly Chu Ti was greatly enlightened. At the time Chu Ti was most earnest and single-minded, so the bottom of his bucket fell out easily. Later, whenever anything was asked, Chu Ti just raised one finger.

Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Delicious food is not for a satisfied

man to eat." Hsuan Sha said, "If I had seen him then, I would have broken the finger off." Hsuan Chueh said, "When Hsuan Sha spoke this way, what was his meaning?" Hsi of Yun Chu said, "When Hsuan Sha spoke this way, was he agreeing with Chu Ti or not? If he agreed with him, why did he speak of breaking off the finger? If he didn't agree with him, where was Chu Ti's mistake?" The Former Ts'ao Shan said, "Chu Ti's realization was crude: he only recognized one device, one perspective. Like everyone else, he claps his hands and slaps his palms, but I look upon Hsi Yuan as exceptional."<sup>a</sup> Again, Hsuan Chueh said, "But say, was Chu Ti enlightened or not? Why was Chu Ti's realization crude?" If he wasn't enlightened, how could he say, "My whole life I've used one-finger Ch'an without ever exhausting it"? Tell me, where is Ts'ao Shan's meaning?

At that time, Chu Ti actually did not understand. After his enlightenment, whenever anything was asked, Chu Ti would just raise one finger; why couldn't a thousand people, even ten thousand people, entrap him or break him apart? If you understand it as a finger, you definitely won't see the Ancient's meaning. This kind of Ch'an is easy to approach but hard to understand. People these days who just hold up a finger or a fist as soon as they're questioned are just indulging their spirits. It is still necessary to pierce the bone, penetrate to the marrow, and see all the way through in order to get it.

At Chu Ti's hermitage there was a servant boy. While he was away from the hermitage, he was asked, "What method does your master usually use to teach people?" The servant boy held up a finger. When he returned, he mentioned this to the Master. Chu Ti took a knife and cut off the boy's finger; as he ran out screaming, Chu Ti called to him. The boy looked back, whereupon Chu Ti raised his finger; the boy opened up and attained understanding. Tell me, what truth did he see?

When he was nearing death, Chu Ti said to his assembly, "I attained T'ien Lung's one-finger Ch'an and have used it all my life without exhausting it. Do you want to understand?" He raised his finger, then died.

The One-Eyed Dragon of Ming Chao asked his 'uncle,' Shen of Kuo T'ai, "An Ancient said that Chu Ti just recited a three line spell and thereby became more famous than anyone else.

How can you quote the three line spell for someone else?" Shen also raised one finger. Chao said, "If not for Today, how could I know this borderlands traveller?" Tell me, what does this mean?

Mi Mo just used a forked branch all his life. The Earth-Beating Teacher would just hit the ground once whenever anything was asked. Once someone hid his staff and then asked, "What is Buddha?" The Teacher just opened his mouth wide. These (methods) too were used for a whole lifetime without ever being exhausted.

Wu Yeh said, "The Patriarch (Bodhidharma) observed that our country had people with the potential to be vessels of the Great Vehicle. He transmitted only the mind seal, in order to instruct those on the paths of illusion. Those who attain it do not choose between ignorance and wisdom, between worldly and holy. Much falsehood is not as good as a little truth. Anyone who is powerful will immediately rest right this moment and abruptly still the myriad entanglements, thus passing beyond the stream of birth and death and going far beyond the usual patterns. Though you have family and estate, if you do not seek, it is attained of itself." Throughout his whole lifetime, whenever anything was asked, Wu Yeh would just say, "Don't think falsely!" Thus it is said, "Penetrate one place, and at once you penetrate a thousand places, ten thousand places. Clearly understand one device, and at once you clearly understand a thousand devices, ten thousand devices."

Generally people these days are not this way; they just indulge in conceptual and emotional interpretations, and don't understand what is most essential with these Ancients. How could Chu Ti have had no other devices to switch to? Why did he just employ one finger? You must realize that here is where Chu Ti helps people so profoundly and intimately.

Do you want to understand how to save strength? Go back to Yuan Ming's saying, "When it's cold, all throughout heaven and earth is cold; when it's warm, all throughout heaven and earth is warm." Mountains, rivers, and earth, extending upward to the solitary heights; myriad forms in profuse array penetrate down through dangerous precipices. Where will you find one finger Ch'an?

## VERSE

*For his appropriate teaching I deeply admire old Chu Ti;  
 \*\*A leper drags along his companions. Only those on  
 the same path know. Nevertheless it's (only) one  
 device, one perspective.\**

*Since space and time have been emptied, who else is there?  
 \*\*Two, three—there's still one more. He too should  
 be struck dead.\**

*Having cast a piece of driftwood onto the ocean,  
 \*\*It's all this. So it is, but it's too  
 inaccessible. Worn out straw sandals; what  
 use does it have!\**

*Together in the night waves we take in blind turtles.  
 \*\*Dragging the sky, searching the earth; what end  
 will there be? When we take them in, what are they  
 good for? We act according to what is imperative.  
 I'd drive them towards a world where there is no  
 Buddha. I've taken you in, Reverend, one blind man.\**

## COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou has mastered literary composition; he's consummately accomplished. He especially likes to make up verses for obscure and unusual public cases. For students of today he censures and praises the Ancients; as guest or host, with a question or an answer, he holds them up before you—this is how he helps people. Thus he says, "For his appropriate teaching I deeply admire old Chu Ti." Tell me, why does Hsueh Tou admire him? Since heaven and earth began, who else has there ever been? Just this one, old Chu Ti. If it had been anyone else, inevitably he would have been inconsistent; only Chu Ti just used one finger up until his old age and death.

People often interpret this wrongly and say, "Mountains, rivers, and the great earth are empty; man is empty; the Dharma is empty too. Even if time and space were emptied out all at once, it's just this one, old Chu Ti." But this has nothing to do with it.

"Having cast a piece of driftwood onto the ocean." Nowadays they call this the ocean of birth and death. Within the ocean of doing, sentient beings appear and disappear without understanding themselves clearly, without hope of getting out. Old Chu Ti extends his mercy to take people in; in the ocean of birth and death he uses one finger to rescue others. It's like letting down a piece of driftwood to rescue a blind turtle. He enables all sentient beings to reach the Other Shore.

"Together in the night waves we take in blind turtles." The Lotus Scripture says, "It's like a one-eyed turtle sticking his nose through a hole in a floating board."<sup>b</sup> When a great man of knowledge receives a fellow who is like a dragon or a tiger, he directs him towards a world where there is Buddha to act in turn as guest and host, and in worlds without Buddhas to cut off the essential way across. Having taken in a blind turtle, what use is it?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Once when Ch'an master T'an Tsang of Hsi Yuan, a successor of Ma Tsu, was making the fire to heat the bath, one of his disciples told him that such menial tasks should be done by one of the novices. The Master said nothing, but clapped his hands three times.
- b. The metaphor: a blind turtle surfacing at the precise moment a piece of driftwood with a hole in it is passing by; the turtle can climb through the hole up out of the sea. This symbolizes the rare opportunity of hearing the Buddhist Teaching while in human form, itself a rare opportunity.



## Lung Ya's Meaning of the Coming from the West

### POINTER

Piled in mountains, heaped in ranges, up against walls, pressed against barriers; if you linger in thought, holding back your potential, you'll be bitterly cramped.

Or else, a man may appear and overturn the great ocean, kick over Mount Sumeru, scatter the white clouds with shouts, and break up empty space; straightaway, with one device, one object, he cuts off the tongues of everyone on earth, so that there is no way for you to approach. Tell me, since ancient times, who has ever been this way? To test, I cite this; look!

### CASE

Lung Ya asked Ts'ui Wei, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"<sup>1</sup>

Wei said, "Pass me the meditation brace."<sup>2</sup>

Ya gave the meditation brace to Wei;<sup>3</sup> Wei took it and hit him.<sup>4</sup>

Ya said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me. In essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West."<sup>5</sup>

Ya also asked Lin Chi, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?"<sup>6</sup>

Chi said, "Pass me the cushion."<sup>7</sup>

Ya took the cushion and handed it to Lin Chi;<sup>8</sup> Chi took it and hit him.<sup>9</sup>

Ya said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me. In essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West."<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. It's an old public case known everywhere; still he wants to put it to the test.
2. What will he use the meditation brace for? (Ts'ui Wei) almost let (Lung Ya) go. Danger!
3. He can't hold on to it; (Lung Ya) is given a fine steed, Green Dragon, but he doesn't know how to ride it. What a pity that he doesn't take charge right away.
4. Got him! What is accomplished by hitting a dead man? He too has fallen into the secondary.
5. This fellow's talk is in the secondary; he draws his bow after the thief has gone.
6. Again he inquires into the commonplace old public case; it's not worth half a cent.
7. If the waves of Ts'ao Ch'i resembled each other, endless numbers of ordinary people would get bogged down. One punishment for all crimes; they're buried in the same pit.
8. As before, he can't hold on to it; as before he's not very clever. What's like the land of Yueh is like Yang Chou.<sup>a</sup>
9. Got him! What a pity to be hitting this kind of dead man. Lin Chi comes out of the same pattern as Ts'ui Wei.
10. Obviously. He's making a living inside the demon cave. He thinks he's gained the advantage.

## COMMENTARY

Master Chih of Ts'ui Yen said, "It was so at that time, but do patchrobed monks these days still have blood under their skin?"

Che of Mt. Kuei said, "Ts'ui Wei and Lin Chi can be called genuine masters of our sect."

Lung Ya was first rate at pulling out the weeds seeking the way; there's no reason why he shouldn't serve as a model for people of later times. After he had a fixed abode, a monk asked him, "Teacher, at that time did you agree with those two venerable adepts?" Ya said, "I agree, as far as agreement goes; it's just that there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." Lung Ya looks carefully in front and behind, and dispenses medicine to suit the disease.

Ta Kuei, however, is not this way; when asked whether Lung Ya had agreed with the two venerable adepts, whether he understood or not, he would have brought his staff down across the back (of the questioner). This not only supports Ts'ui Wei and Lin Chi, but also doesn't turn away from the questioner.

Ts'ung of Shih Men said, "Lung Ya is still all right if there's no one to press him, but when he's pressed by a patched robe one, he loses one eye."

Hsueh Tou said, "Lin Chi and Ts'ui Wei only knew how to hold still; they didn't know how to let go. If I had been Lung Ya at that time, when they asked for the cushion and meditation brace, I would have picked it up and immediately thrown it down right in front of them."

Wu Tsu Shih Chieh said, "The Teacher has such a long face!" He also said, "The patriarchal masters' star of ill-omen is over his head."

Hsin of Huang Lung Mountain said, "Lung Ya drove off the ploughman's ox, he snatched away the hungry man's food. Once he's clear, he's clear; why then is there no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? Do you understand? On the staff there is an eye bright as the sun; to tell whether gold is real, see it through fire."

To extol the wonder of the essential, to advocate the fundamental vehicle, if you can understand it the very first instant, then you can cut off the tongues of everyone on earth. But if you vacillate, you fall into the secondary. These two old fellows Lin Chi and Ts'ui Wei, though they beat the wind and hit the rain, startle heaven and shake the earth, have never really hit a clear eyed fellow.

When the Ancients immersed themselves in meditation, they suffered some pains; having established powerful resolve, they would traverse mountains and rivers to call on venerable adepts. First Lung Ya met Ts'ui Wei and Lin Chi; later he called on Te Shan. There he asked, "How is it when a student holding a sharp sword tries to take the teacher's head?" Te Shan stretched out his neck and uttered a grunt. Ya said, "The teacher's head has fallen." Te Shan smiled slightly and let it go at that.

Next Lung Ya went to Tung Shan. Tung Shan asked, "Where did you come here from?" Ya said, "From Te Shan." Tung Shan said, "What did Te Shan have to say?" Ya then recounted the

preceding story. Tung Shan asked, "What did he say?" Ya said, "He had no words." Tung Shan said, "Don't say that he had no words. Instead try to take Te Shan's fallen head and show it to me." At this Ya had insight; thereupon he burned incense and gazed far off towards Te Shan; he prostrated himself and repented.

When he heard of this, Te Shan said, "Old man Tung Shan can't tell good from bad; this fellow has been dead so long, what's the use of saving him? Let him wander over the earth carrying my head."

Lung Ya's basic nature was intelligent and acute. He went foot travelling carrying a bellyfull of Ch'an. As soon as he got to Ts'ui Wei in Ch'ang An he immediately asked, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Wei said, "Pass me the meditation brace," Ya took the meditation brace and gave it to Wei. Wei took it and hit him. Ya said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." He also asked Lin Chi, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Lin Chi said, "Pass me the cushion." Ya took the cushion and gave it to Lin Chi; Chi took it and hit him. Ya said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West."

When Lung Ya posed the question, he not only wanted to see the old fellows up on the carved wood seats, he also wanted to illumine the great concern of his own self. We can say that his words were not spoken in vain, that his effort was not expended haphazardly; they issued from his doing his work.

Haven't you heard? Wu Hsieh went to see Shih T'ou. He had made an agreement with himself beforehand saying, "If there's accord at the first word I'll stay; otherwise, I'll go." Shih T'ou just sat on his seat; Hsieh shook out his sleeves and went out. Shih T'ou knew that Wu Hsieh was a vessel of the truth, so he had extended his teaching to him. But Hsieh hadn't understood his meaning; he had announced his departure and gone out. When he got to the gate Shih T'ou called out to him, "Reverend!" When Hsieh looked back, Shih T'ou said, "From birth to death it's only this; don't seek anymore for anything else by turning your head and revolving your brain." At these words Hsieh was greatly enlightened.

Also, Ma Ku came to Chang Ching carrying his ring-staff; he

walked three times around the meditation seat, shook his staff once, and stood there upright. Ching said, "Right, right." He also went to Nan Ch'uan; as before he walked three times around the seat, shook his staff and stood there. Nan Ch'uan said, "Wrong, wrong. This is what the power of the wind can whirl around; in the end it decomposes." Ma Ku said, "Chang Ching said right; why do you say wrong?" Nan Ch'uan said, "Chang Ching was right; it is you who are wrong."<sup>b</sup>

Inevitably the Ancients had to take up and penetrate through this one matter. People today, as soon as they are questioned, have not made the slightest application of effort; they're this way today, and they'll be this way tomorrow too: if you just keep on like this, even into the endless future you will never have a day of completion. You must arouse and purify your spirit; only thus will you have some small share of realization.

Look at Lung Ya coming out with one question, saying, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Ts'ui Wei said, "Pass me the meditation brace." When Ya gave it to him, he took it and immediately hit Ya. When Ya picked up the meditation brace, how could he have not known that Wei was going to hit him? And it won't do to say that Ya didn't understand, for why then did he pass the meditation brace to Wei? But tell me, at the moment he understood, how should Ya have acted? He didn't go to the living water to function, but took himself into the dead water for his sustenance. Acting as master throughout, he said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West."

Lung Ya also went to Hopeh to call on Lin Chi. He asked his question as before. Lin Chi said, "Pass me the cushion." When Ya gave it to him, he took it and immediately hit Ya. Ya said, "Since you hit me I let you hit me; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." Tell me, these two venerable adepts were not of the same lineage; why did their answers resemble each other, why was their functioning of one kind? You must realize that the one word, one phrase of the Ancients was not uttered at random.

Later when Lung Ya dwelt in a temple, a monk asked him, "Teacher, at that time, when you saw the two worthies, did you agree with them or not?" Ya said, "As far as agreement

goes, I agreed, but there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." There are thorns in the soft mud. To let go for people is already falling into the secondary; this old fellow (Lung Ya) held steady—he only acted as an adept in the Tung succession.<sup>c</sup> To be a disciple of Te Shan or Lin Chi, he would have had to realize that there is a living side besides. As for me, I am not this way; I would have told the monk, "As far as agreement is concerned, I don't agree; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West."

Haven't you heard how a monk asked Ta Mei, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Mei said, "The coming from the West has no meaning." Yen Kuan heard of this and said, "One coffin, two dead men." Hsuan Sha heard of this and said, "Yen Kuan is indeed an adept!" (To which) Hsueh Tou said, "There are even three (dead men)." The monk asked about the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West; though Ta Mei told him that the coming from the West has no meaning, if you understand in this way, you fall into the realm of unconcern. Therefore Te Shan (Yuan Mi) said, "You must study the living word; don't study the dead word. If you can understand at the living word, you will never forget it; if you understand at the dead word, you won't even be able to save yourself."

When Lung Ya spoke this way, he had undeniably done his best. The Ancient Tung Shan said, "Continuity is very difficult." The other Ancients, Ts'ui Wei and Lin Chi, were not acting at random with their one word, one phrase; before and after mutually illuminating, with both temporal and true, with both illumination and function, guest and host obvious, interchanging vertically and horizontally.

If you want to discern the inside story, since Lung Ya was not ignorant of the vehicle of our sect, how could he have fallen into second place? At the time when the two venerable adepts asked for the meditation brace and cushion, Ya could not have but known their intention. It was just that he wanted to make use of that which was within his own breast. Although he was right, nevertheless his use of it was too extreme. Since Lung Ya asked this way, and the two old ones answered this way, why then is there no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West? When you get here you must know that there's something else extraordinary. Hsueh Tou picks it up to show people:

## VERSE

*In Dragon Tusk Mountain the dragon has no eyes;<sup>d</sup>*

*\*\*He's blind. He can fool other people all  
right, (but not me.) This is washing a clod  
of earth in the mud. Everyone on earth knows. \**

*When has dead water ever displayed the ancient way?*

*\*\*Should it suddenly come to life, nothing can  
be done. He drags in everyone on earth so that  
they can't get out. \**

*If you can't use the meditation brace and cushion,*

*\*\*Who would you have say this? What do you want  
to do with the meditation brace and cushion?  
Didn't he hand them over to you, Reverend? \**

*You should just give them over to Mr. Lu.*

*\*\*But they can't be given over. You  
lacquer bucket, don't entertain such  
views! \**

## COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou settles the case according to the facts. Though he versifies this way, tell me, where is his meaning? Where does the dragon lack eyes? Where is he in dead water? At this point you must have the power to transform before you realize. That is why it is said, "In a clear pool there's no place for the blue dragon to coil up." Has there ever been a fierce dragon in stagnant water? Haven't you heard it said, "Stagnant water cannot conceal a dragon"? If it is a live dragon, it must go to where vast swelling billows of foamy waves flood the heavens. This is to say that Lung Ya went into the dead water and was hit by the others. Yet he did say, "Since you hit me I let you hit me; in essence, though, there is no meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West." This prompted Hsueh Tou to say, "When has dead water ever displayed the ancient way?" Although this is so, tell me, was Hsueh Tou upholding (Lung Ya), or was he diminishing his dignity?

People often misunderstand and ask, "Why did Hsueh Tou say, 'You should just give them over to Mr. Lu'?" They are far from knowing that Lung Ya did indeed give them to the others.

Whenever you visit masters to ask for instruction, you must discriminate in the midst of the action; only then will you see where those Ancients met.

"If you can't use the meditation brace and cushion." Ts'ui Wei said, "Pass me the meditation brace," and Lung Ya gave it to him; isn't this making a living within dead water? Clearly Lung Ya has been given a fine steed; it's just that he doesn't know how to ride it, that he is unable to make use of it.

"You should just give them over to Mr. Lu." People frequently say that Mr. Lu is the Sixth Patriarch; this is wrong. Hsueh Tou has called himself Mr. Lu previously in a verse called "Anonymous Bequest"—

*I saw its picture that year and loved Tung T'ing;<sup>e</sup>  
In the waves, seventy-two peaks of blue.  
Now, resting on high, I think back to what was  
before,  
To the picture, I've added Mr. Lu leaning against a  
wall.*

Hsueh Tou wanted to walk on Lung Ya's head, but he still feared that people would misunderstand, so he made up another verse to cut away people's doubtful interpretations. Again he picks it up and says,

#### VERSE

*Since this old fellow couldn't yet put an end to it, again he makes a verse:*

*\*\*Obviously. How many people could there be who would know? He knew himself that he had attained only a half; luckily he has a final word.\**

*Once Mr. Lu has accepted them, why depend on them?*

*\*\*Even if you search the whole world, such a man is still hard to find. Who would you have comprehend your words?\**

*Sitting, leaning—cease taking these to succeed to the lamp of the Patriarchs!*



*\*\*A man in the weeds; he goes in to sit beneath the black mountain. He has fallen into the ghost cave. \**

*It's worth replying: the evening clouds, returning, have not yet come together;*

*\*\*One, a half. Bring it up and already you're wrong. After all he can't get out. \**

*Distant mountains without end, layer upon layer of blue.*

*\*\*They block off your eyes, they block off your ears. You sink into a deep pit. Study for thirty more years. \**

#### COMMENTARY

"Once Mr. Lu has accepted them, why depend on them?" What is there to depend on? Here you must understand things directly this way; don't go on guarding a stump waiting for a rabbit. Smash what's before your skull all at once, so that there isn't the slightest bit of concern within your breast. Let go and become clean and at ease. Then what more need is there for something to rely on? Whether sitting (on the cushion) or leaning (on the brace), it's not worth considering it the principle of the Buddha Dharma. That is why Hsueh Tou said, "Sitting, leaning—cease to take these to succeed to the lamp of the Patriarchs." At once, Hsueh Tou has brought it up completely; he has a place to turn around in, and at the end reveals this scene where there's a bit of a nice place. He says, "It's worth replying: the evening clouds, returning, have not yet come together." Tell me, where is Hsueh Tou's meaning? When the evening clouds have returned and are about to join together but have not yet done so, tell me, how is it then? "Distant mountains without end, layer upon layer of blue." As before he's gone into the ghost cave. When you get here, when gain and loss, right and wrong, are cut off all at once, and you are clean and at ease, only then do you amount to something. "Distant mountains without end, layer upon layer of blue." Tell me, is this Manjusri's realm? Is this Samantabhadra's realm? Is this Avalokitesvara's realm? When you get here, tell me, whose affair is this?

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. "What's like the land of Yueh is like Yang Chou" in that these two names refer to the same area of China; broadly speaking, the coastal plain river country north and south of the mouth of the Yangtse River, especially the modern provinces Chekiang and Kiangsu.
- b. This story, quoted here in a somewhat different form, is the main example of the thirty-first case; Kato Totsudo thinks that it may have been inserted into this commentary by a later hand.
- c. In Sung times some Lin Chi masters criticized the Ts'ao-Tung masters for being too fond of quiescence, abiding in extinction, absorbed by the vastness of the universe; the fifth rank of the Ts'ao-Tung's five ranks was symbolized by a solid black circle, which the Lin Chi masters often took to mean *nirvana* as extinction. Tenkei Denson sometimes remarked that Yuan Wu was not thoroughly familiar with the devices of the Tung lineage, and did not realize that there is a turning point, a pivot, in each rank. The Lin Chi masters emphasized the experience of *wu* (*satori*), enlightenment or awakening, and its active expression; they were foremost in the use of contemplation themes, upon which they would focus with a force known as 'doubt' or 'great doubt'. The tension of the doubt was used to rid the mind of wandering thought, unify the attention, and break mental habit patterns; the sudden dissolution of the 'mass of doubt' was sometimes brought about by blows or shouts, by a gesture, a word or phrase. After dying 'the great death' and entering the Path, one is supposed to return to life, awake and free; but it is said that many do not return, being absorbed by the peace of death, forsaking forever the clamor of life. Lung Ya is being 'criticized' for not showing his own initiative.
- d. This refers to Lung Ya; the name Lung Ya means dragon's tusk, and is the name of the mountain on which the Ch'an master Chu Tun lived. As is customary, he is usually referred to by the name of the place where he lived.
- e. This refers to Tung T'ing mountain in Su Chou (Soochow), Chekiang, eastern China, where Hsueh Tou lived at one time, on Ts'ui Feng (Green Peak). Hsueh Tou added a little picture of himself to a painting of Tung T'ing; this poem is just cited to show that 'Mr. Lu' refers to Hsueh Tou himself.

# Chih Men's Lotus Flower, Lotus Leaves

## INTRODUCTORY INSTRUCTION

Setting up the banner of the Teaching, establishing the essential meaning—this is adding flowers to brocade. Strip off the blinders, unload the saddle pack—this is the season of the great peace. If you can discern the phrase outside of patterns, then when one is raised you understand three. Otherwise, if you're not yet this way, as before humbly listen to this treatment.

## MAIN CASE

A monk asked Chih Men, "How is it when the lotus flower has not yet emerged from the water?"<sup>1</sup> Chih Men said, "A Lotus flower."<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "What about after it has emerged from the water?"<sup>3</sup> Men said, "Lotus leaves."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. The hook is on the doubt-free ground. Washing a lump of dirt in the mud. How did he get this news?
2. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven. He stumps everyone on earth.
3. Don't go inside the ghost cave to make a living. Again the monk goes on this way.
4. Yu Chou (up north) is still alright: the worst suffering is south of the River. Two heads, three faces. He kills everyone on earth with laughter.

## COMMENTARY

As for dealing with people in accordance with their potentials, Chih Men has attained a little. When it comes to cutting off the myriad streams, he's a million miles away. But say, is this flower before and after it emerges from the water the same or different? If you can see this way, I'll grant that you've had an entry. Nevertheless, if you say it's the same, you confuse your buddha-nature and becloud true thusness. If you say it's different, mind and environment are not yet forgotten, and you descend to travel the road of interpretation. When will you ever cease?

Tell me, what is the ancient's meaning? In reality there aren't so many concerns. That is why T'ou Tzu said, "Just don't attach names and words, classification and phrasing. If you have understood all things, naturally you won't be attached to them. Then there is no multiplicity of gradations of differences; you take in all things; but all things won't be able to take you in. Fundamentally there is no gain or loss, no illusions or dreams, no multiplicity of names. You should not insist on setting up names for them. Can I fool all of you people? Since all of you ask questions, therefore there are words. If you didn't ask, what could you have me say that would be right? All concerns are what you take up: none of it is any of my business." An ancient said, "If you want to know the meaning of the buddha nature, you must observe times and seasons, causes and conditions."

Haven't you seen Yun Men cite this story: A monk asked Ling Yun, "How was it before the Buddha appeared in the world?" Ling Yun raised his whisk. The monk asked, "What about after he appeared in the world?" Again Ling Yun raised his whisk. Yun Men said, "The first time he hit, the second time he missed." He also said, "Without speaking of appearing and not appearing, where would there be the time of his asking?"

With one answer for one question the ancients accorded with the time and season without a multitude of concerns. If you pursue words and follow after phrases, there will never be any connection. If in the midst of words you can penetrate through words, if in the midst of meanings you can pass through meanings, if within a device you can penetrate

through the device, and if you let go and let yourself be at ease, only then will you see Chih Men's answer.<sup>a</sup>

Yun Men said, "From ancient times till today, it's just been one thing. There is no right or wrong, no gain or loss, no born or not born." When they got here the ancients laid down one single path where there's an entrance and an exit. If it's a man who hasn't yet understood, then he's pressing against a fence, running his hands over a wall,<sup>b</sup> (like a ghost) haunting the weeds and trees. If you make him let go, he still goes into the wild vast desolation. If it is a man who has attained, then twenty-four hours a day he won't depend on a single thing. While he doesn't depend on a single thing, when he reveals one device, one object, how will you search him out?

This monk asked, "How is it when the lotus flowers have not yet emerged from the water?" Chih Men said, "A Lotus flower." This then is just an answer that blocks the question, nevertheless it's exceptional. All over it's called "upside-down words." How so? Haven't you heard: Yen T'ou said, "I always hope you would attain a little before you open your mouths."

Where the ancient one Chih Men revealed his mind, he was already leaking and tarrying. Students these days don't wake up to the ancient's meaning: they just go on talking theoretically of "emerged from the water" and "not yet emerged from the water." What connection is there?

Haven't you heard: A monk asked Chih Men, "What is the body of Wisdom?" Men said, "An oyster enclosing the bright moon." The monk asked, "What is the functioning of Wisdom?" Men said, "A rabbit becomes pregnant." Look at him responding like this: no one on earth can search out the stream of his words.

If someone asked me, "How is it when the lotus flowers have not yet emerged from the water?" I would just answer him by saying, "The pillar and the lamp."<sup>c</sup> Tell me, is this the same as the lotus flowers or different? If I were asked, "What about after they've emerged from the water?" I would answer, "The staff upholds the sun and moon, underfoot how muddy and deep!" You tell me, is this right or wrong? And don't mistakenly stick by the zero point of a scale.

Hsueh Tou is extremely compassionate, breaking up people's emotional interpretations, so he comes out with his verse:

## VERSE

*Lotus flower, lotus leaves—he reports for you to know*

*\*\*Grandmotherly kindness. A manifest public case. Its pattern is already revealed.\**

*How can emerging from the water compare to when it has not yet emerged?*

*\*\*Washing a lump of dirt in the mud. Dividing them is alright, but you can't lump them together.\**

*North of the river, south of the river, ask Old Wang*

*\*\*Where is the master? Why ask Old Master Wang? You're just wearing out your straw sandals.\**

*Fox-doubt after fox-doubt*

*\*\*I bury them in one hole. It's you who doubt. You won't avoid feelings of doubt without respite. Having struck I say, "Do you understand?"\**

## COMMENTARY

Originally Chih Men was from Chekiang. He made his way by stages to Szechuan to call on Hsiang Lin. After he had penetrated (this affair under Hsiang Lin's guidance), he returned to dwell at Chih Men in Sui Chou.

Hsueh Tou was Chih Men's true successor: he saw well Chih Men's most hidden, most subtle point and says directly, "Lotus flower, lotus leaves—he reports for you to know/How can emerging from the water compare to when it has not yet emerged?" Here he wants people to understand directly and immediately.

I say, "How is it when they've not yet emerged from the water? The pillar and lamp. What about after they've emerged? The staff upholds the sun and moon, underfoot how muddy and deep!" But don't mistakenly abide by this as the zero point of a scale. What limit is there to people these days chewing over the words and phrases of others?

But tell me, when they emerge from the water, what time and season is this? When they've not yet emerged from the water, what time and season is this? If you can see to this point, I'll allow that you've seen Chih Men personally.

Hsueh Tou says, if you don't see, "North of the river, south of the river, ask Old Wang." Hsueh Tou means that you should just go north of the river and south of the river to ask the venerable adepts about "emerged from the water" and "not emerged from the water." If you add two phrases south of the river, add two phrases north of the river, add one load upon another load, creating doubts over and over, just tell me, when will you get so that you don't doubt? You're like wild foxes, full of doubt, walking on river ice: they listen for the sound of the water (below); if it doesn't make a sound, then they can cross the river. If students have "fox-doubt after fox-doubt," when will they attain peace and tranquility?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Following this, the Chang book inserts, "'How is it before the Buddha appeared in the world?' 'How was it before Niu T'ou saw the fourth patriarch?' 'How is it when a conglomerate stone is still undifferentiated inside?' 'How was it before your parents bore you?'" These are supposed to be in the same category as 'How is it before the lotus emerges from the water?' The lotus is a traditional symbol for enlightenment.
- b. Pressing against a fence, running his hands over a wall, as a blind man would.
- c. "The pillar and the lamp": Physical reality, the world of objects, such as the pillar and the lamp that would have been present in the Dharma Halls right in front of the eyes of Yuan Wu's listeners.

# Hsueh Feng's Turtle-Nosed Snake

## POINTER

There's nothing outside the great vastness; it's as fine as atomic dust. Holding on and letting go are not another's (doing): rolling up and rolling out<sup>a</sup> rest with oneself. If you want to free what is stuck and loosen what is bound, you simply must cut away the traces (of thought) and swallow the sounds (of words). All people occupy the essential crossing place; each and every one towers up like a thousand fathom wall. But tell me, whose realm is this? To test, I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Hsueh Feng taught the assembly saying, "On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake.<sup>1</sup> All of you people must take a good look."<sup>2</sup>

Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "In the hall today there certainly are people who are losing their bodies and their lives."<sup>3</sup>

A monk related this to Hsuan Sha.<sup>4</sup> Hsuan Sha said, "It takes Elder Brother Leng (Ch'ang Ch'ing) to be like this. Nevertheless, I am not this way."<sup>5</sup> The monk asked, "What about you, Teacher?"<sup>6</sup> Hsuan Sha said, "Why make use of 'South Mountain'?"<sup>7</sup>

Yun Men took his staff and threw it down in front of Hsueh Feng, making a gesture of fright.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. If you see something strange as not strange, it's strangeness disappears by itself. What a strange thing! Unavoidably it causes people to doubt.
2. Aha! A case of over-indulgence.



3. The man from P'u Chou (Ch'ang Ch'ing) escorts the thief. He judges others on the basis of himself.
4. There's no different dirt from the same hole. When the manservant sees the maidservant he takes care. Those with the same disease sympathize with each other.
5. He doesn't avoid forming a wild fox spirit view. What news is this? His poison breath afflicts others.
6. He too presses the old fellow well.
7. On a boat fishing, the third son of the Hsiehs (Hsuan Sha). Only this wild fox spirit has attained a little. He's lost his body and his life and doesn't even realize it.
8. Why be afraid of it? One son has intimately attained. All of them are giving play to their spirits. All of you try to discern this.

#### COMMENTARY

If you spread it out evenly, I let you spread it out evenly; if you break it up, I let you break it up.

Hsueh Feng travelled with Yen T'ou and Ch'in Shan. In all, he went to Mt. T'ou Tzu three times, and climbed Mt. Tung nine times. Later he called on Te Shan, and only then did he smash the lacquer bucket.

One day he went along with Yen T'ou to visit Ch'in Shan. They got as far as an inn on Tortoise Mountain (in Hunan) when they were snowed in. Day after day Yen T'ou just slept, while Hsueh Feng constantly sat in meditation. Yen T'ou yelled at him and said, "Get some sleep! Every day you're on the meditation seat, exactly like a clay image. Another time, another day, you'll fool the sons and daughters of other people's families." Feng pointed to his breast and said, "I am not yet at peace here; I don't dare deceive myself." T'ou said, "I had thought that later on you would go to the summit of a solitary peak, build a hut of straw, and propagate the great teaching: but you're still making such a statement as this." Feng said, "I am really not yet at peace." T'ou said, "If you're really like this, bring forth your views one by one; where they're correct I'll approve them for you, and where they're wrong I'll prune them away for you."

Then Hsueh Feng related, "When I saw Yen Kuan up in the

hall bringing up the meaning of form and void, I gained an entry." Yen T'ou said, "Henceforth for thirty years avoid mentioning this." Again Feng said, "When I saw Tung Shan's verse on crossing the river,<sup>b</sup> I had an insight." T'ou said, "This way, you won't be able to save yourself." Feng went on, "Later when I got to Te Shan I asked, 'Do I have a part in the affair of the vehicle of the most ancient sect, or not?' Shan struck me a blow of his staff and said, 'What are you saying?' At that time it was like the bottom of the bucket dropping out for me." Thereupon Yen T'ou shouted and said, "Haven't you heard it said that what comes in through the gate is not the family jewels?" Feng said, "Then what should I do?" T'ou said, "In the future, if you want to propagate the great teaching, let each point flow out from your own breast, to come out and cover heaven and earth for me." At these words Hsueh Feng was greatly enlightened. Then he bowed, crying out again and again, "Today on Tortoise Mountain I've finally achieved the Way! Today on Tortoise Mountain I've finally achieved the Way!"

Later Hsueh Feng returned to Min (Fukien) and lived on Elephant Bone Mountain. He left behind this verse about himself:

*Human life so hectic and hurried is but a brief instant;*

*How can you dwell for long in the fleeting world?*

*As I reached thirty-two I emerged from the mountains;*

*Already over forty, I return to Min.*

*No use bringing up the faults of others again and again;*

*One's own mistakes must be cleared away continually.*

*I humbly report to the purple-clad nobles who fill the court:*

*The King of Death has no awe of the golden emblems of rank you wear.*

Usually Hsueh Feng would go up into the hall and teach the assembly by saying, "In every respect cover heaven and cover earth." He talked no more of mystery or marvel, nor did he speak of mind or nature. He appeared strikingly, alone, like a

great fiery mass; approach and he burns off your face. Like the T'ai Ya sword, fool around with him and you lose your body and your life. If you linger in thought, holding back your activity, then you lose contact.

Pai Ching asked Huang Po, "Where are you coming from?" Po said, "I've been at the foot of Mt. Ta Hsiung picking mushrooms." Chang said, "See any tigers?" Po then made a tiger's roar. Then Chang picked up an axe and made a chopping motion; Po then slapped him. Chang chuckled and went back and ascended his seat and told the assembly, "There's a tiger on Mt. Ta Hsiung; all of you should watch out for him. Today I myself was bitten by him."

Whenever Chao Chou saw a monk, right away he would say, "Have you ever been here?" Whether the monk said he had or he hadn't, Chou would always say, "Go drink some tea." The temple overseer asked, "The teacher always asks monks if they've been here or not, then always says, 'Go drink some tea.' What is the meaning?" Chou said, "Overseer!" When the overseer responded, Chou said, "Go drink some tea."

Beneath the gate at Tzu Hu stood a signboard; the writing on the plaque said, "At Tzu Hu there's a dog: on top he takes people's heads, in the middle he takes people's midsections, and below he takes people's legs; hesitate and you're lost." As soon as he saw any newcomer, the Master of Tzu Hu would immediately give a shout and say, "Look at the dog!" The moment the monk turned his head, the master would return to his abbot's room.

(These examples) are just like Hsueh Feng's saying, "On South Mountain there is a turtle-nosed snake; all of you people should watch it carefully." At just such a time, how would you reply? Without following in your former tracks, try to say something for me to see. When you get here, you must understand the phrase outside of patterns; then, when all the public cases are brought up, you will immediately know where they come down. See how Hsueh Feng teaches the assembly this way, without speaking to you of practice or understanding. Can you figure him out by means of intellectual discrimination?

Since Ch'ang Ch'ing, Hsuan Sha, and Yun Men are sons of his house, what they say is exactly appropriate. This is why the Ancient said, "On hearing words, you must understand the

source; don't set up standards on your own." Words must have that which is beyond patterns; phrases must penetrate the barrier. If your words don't leave their nest of cliché, you fall into the poison sea.

Hsueh Feng's teaching the assembly this way can be called flavorless talk that blocks off people's mouths. Ch'ang Ch'ing and Hsuan Sha are both men of his family, thus they understand when he speaks this way.

What about "On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake"? Do all of you know what this really means? Here you must be possessed of the all-pervasive eye in order to understand. Haven't you seen Chen Ching's verse which says,

*Beating the drum, strumming the lute,  
Two men of understanding meet.  
Yun Men is able to harmonize—  
Ch'ang Ch'ing knows how to follow his vagaries;  
The ancient song has no rhyme.  
South Mountain's turtle-nosed snake;  
Who knows this meaning?  
Truly it's Hsuan Sha.*

When Ch'ang Ch'ing replied as he did, tell me, what was his meaning? To get here you must be like a stone-struck spark, like a lightning flash; only then will you be able to reach. If there's as much as a fine hair that you can't get rid of, then you won't be able to reach his depths. It's a pity that people mostly make intellectual interpretations of Ch'ang Ch'ing's words. They say, "As soon as anything is heard in the hall, then this is 'losing body and life.'" Some say, "Fundamentally there's not the slightest speck of anything; to say this kind of thing on even blank ground makes people doubt. People hear him say, 'On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake,' and immediately they have doubts." If you understand in such ways, you have no contact; you just go on making a living on the words. If you don't understand this way, then how will you understand?

Later a monk related this to Hsuan Sha. Hsuan Sha said, "It takes Elder Brother Leng (Ch'ang Ch'ing) to be like this; nevertheless, I am not thus." The monk asked, "What about you, teacher?" Hsuan Sha said, "Why make use of 'South Mountain'?" Just observe how within Hsuan Sha's words there

is a place where he shows himself. Immediately he said, "Why make use of 'South Mountain'?" If it hadn't been Hsuan Sha, it would have been very difficult to reply. When Hsueh Feng speaks this way, "On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake," tell me, where is it? To get here you must be a transcendent person; only then will you be able to understand such talk. The man of old Hsueh Tou said, "Up on the boat fishing, the third son of the Hsieh doesn't like South Mountain; he prefers the turtle-nosed snake."

Then again we get to Yun Men; he took his staff and threw it down in front of Hsueh Feng, making a gesture of fright. Yun Men has the ability to handle snakes, and doesn't run afoul of the sharp point. He strikes home in light, and he strikes home in darkness too. As he helps people it's always like doing a sword dance; sometimes he flies onto people's eyebrows and eyelashes, sometimes he flies three thousand miles away and snatches people's heads. His throwing down his staff and making a gesture of fright— isn't this giving play to his spirit? Doesn't he lose his body and life too? Expert teaching masters never go to a word or phrase to make a living. Just because he likes the way Yun Men accorded perfectly with Hsueh Feng's meaning, therefore Hsueh Tou makes his verse on it:

#### VERSE

*Elephant Bone Cliff is so high no one goes there;*

*\*\*A thousand, ten thousand, search but cannot  
find. It's not your realm, sir.\**

*Those who get there must be master snake handlers.*

*\*\*This is a spirit recognizing a spirit, a thief  
recognizing a thief. Why gather in crowds!  
Still, you must be of the same group to make it.\**

*Master Leng and Master Pei can't do anything—*

*\*\*Their crimes are listed on the same indictment.  
They passed up the first move.\**

*How many lose their bodies and their lives!*

*\*\*A crime is not judged twice. He drags  
in common people.\**

Shao Yang knows:

*\*\*He's just attained a little.  
This old fellow has just one single  
eye. The old fellow is just  
being clever.\**

Again he searches the weeds—

*\*\*He's a fellow fallen in the weeds;  
what is the use! After all, where  
is (the 'snake')! I strike!\**

South, north, east, west; no place to search.

*\*\*Is there! Is there! Your eyes are  
blind, Reverend.\**

Suddenly he thrusts out his staff,

*\*\*Look! Set your eyes high. I strike!\**

And throws it down before Hsueh Feng; it opens wide its  
mouth.

*\*\*Self-contrived, self-experienced. It swallows a  
thousand, ten thousand, but what is accomplished?  
No one on earth can find it.\**

The gaping mouth is like a lightning flash;

*\*\*A double case. After all. Fortunately  
there is a final word.\**

Raise your eyebrows (to look) and you won't see.

*\*\*It's already gone by. Search all over for  
such a man, and still it's hard to find one.  
Right now where is (the snake)!\**

Right now it's hidden here on Ju Peak;

*\*\*Where has it gone! Even the  
great Hsueh Tou acts this way  
too. Today I too have been bitten.\**

Those who come, one by one observe expedient methods.

*\*\*Blind! Don't look under his feet; look under  
your own feet. He's shot an arrow.\**

The Master (Hsueh Tou) shouted loudly and said, "Look right  
under your feet!"

*\*\*He draws his bow after the thief has gone. Secondary,  
tertiary. Repeated words are not worth enduring.\**

## COMMENTARY

"Elephant Bone Cliff is so high that no one goes there; those who get there must be master snake handlers." On Hsueh Feng Mountain there is an Elephant Bone Cliff. Hsueh Feng's active edge is lofty and steep; rarely is there anyone who reaches his place. Hsueh Tou is a man of his house; they're birds of a feather. Answering each other with the same voice, seeking each other with the same spirit; it takes all-competent adepts to join in the mutual witness of enlightenment.

Still, this turtle-nosed snake is unavoidably hard to handle; you must know how to handle it before you can do so. Conversely, if you don't know how to handle it, you'll be bitten by the snake. My late teacher Wu Tsu said, "With this turtle-nosed snake, you must have the ability not to get your hands or legs bitten. Hold him tight by the back of the neck with one quick grab. Then you can join hands and walk along with me."

Ch'ang Ch'ing and Hsuan Sha had this kind of ability. When Hsueh Tou says that Master Leng and Master Pei couldn't handle it, people often say that Ch'ang Ch'ing and Hsuan Sha couldn't do anything about it, and thus Hsueh Tou only praises Yun Men. But this has nothing to do with it. How far they are from knowing that among the three men there is no gain or loss in ability; it's just that there is close and far away. Now I ask all of you people, where is it that Master Leng and Master Pei couldn't manage?

"How many lose their bodies and their lives?" This praises Ch'ang Ch'ing's saying, "In the hall today there certainly are people who lose their bodies and lives." To get here, first you must be thoroughly versed in snake handling.

Hsueh Tou is descended from Yun Men, so he brushes the others away all at once and just keeps one, Yun Men: Hsueh Tou says, "Shao Yang knows; again he searches the weeds." Since Yun Men knew the meaning of Hsueh Feng's saying, "On South Mountain there's a turtle-nosed snake," therefore "Again he searches through the weeds."

After Hsueh Tou has taken his verse this far, he still has more marvels. He says, "South, north, east, west; no place to search." You tell me where the snake is. "Suddenly he thrusts out his staff." From the beginning the snake has been right

here. But you must not then go to the staff for sustenance. Yun Men took his staff and threw it down in front of Hsueh Feng, making a gesture of fright. Thus Yun Men used his staff as the turtle-nosed snake. Once, though, he said, "The staff changed into a dragon and has swallowed the universe; where are mountains, rivers and the great earth to be found?" Just this one staff—sometimes it's a dragon, sometimes it's a snake. Why is it like this? Only when you get here will you know (the meaning of the) ancient saying, "Mind revolves along with myriad phenomena; the turning point is truly mysterious."

The verse says, "He throws it down before Hsueh Feng; it opens wide its mouth. The gaping mouth is like a lightning flash." Hsueh Tou has extra talent; he picks up Yun Men's poisonous snake and says, "Just this gaping mouth is like a flash of lightning." If you hesitate, then you lose your body and life. "Raise your eyebrows (to look), and you won't see." Where has it gone?

His verse finished, Hsueh Tou must go to a living place to help others; he takes Hsueh Feng's snake and picks it up and plays with it himself. Nothing can stop him from killing or bringing to life in accordance with the occasion. Do you want to see? He says, "Right now it's hidden here on Ju Peak." Ju Peak is a name for Hsueh Tou Mountain.

Though Ch'ang Ch'ing, Hsuan Sha, and Yun Men can handle the snake, they don't see. After all Hsueh Tou says, "Right now it's hidden here on Ju Peak; those who come, one by one observe expedient methods." Hsueh Tou is still too subtle; he doesn't say, "Use it right away," but instead shouted loudly and said, "Look right under your feet!" Since ancient times how many people have picked up the snake and played with it? Tell me, has the snake ever wounded anyone or not?

Then the Master Yuan Wu struck.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. In the *Chueh Kuan Lun* by Master Fa Jung of Ox Head Mountain it says: Q: What is 'rolling out'? A: Illumination and action is 'rolling out.' Q: What is 'rolling up'? A: Mind quiescent and extinct (nirvana) is 'rolling up.' When rolling out he travels



everywhere throughout the universe; when rolling up even the traces of his concentration are impossible to look for.

- b. See the biography of Tung Shan Liang Chieh. After leaving his teacher Yun Yen, he happened to see a reflection of himself as he crossed a river, and thereupon was greatly enlightened and composed the verse.

# Pao Fu's Summit of the Mystic Peak

## POINTER

Jewels are tested with fire, gold is tested with a stone; a sword is tested with a hair, water is tested with a pole. In the school of the patchrobed monks, in one word, one phrase, one act, one state, one exit, one entry, one encounter, one response, you must see whether someone is deep or shallow, you must see whether he is facing forwards or backwards. But tell me, what will you use to test him with? I bring this up: look!

## CASE

Once when Pao Fu and Ch'ang Ch'ing were wandering in the mountains,<sup>1</sup> Pao Fu pointed with his hand and said, "Right here is the summit of the mystic peak."<sup>2</sup>

Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Indeed it is. What a pity!"<sup>3</sup>

Hsueh Tou added a word, saying, "Today what is the purpose of travelling the mountains together with these fellows?"<sup>4</sup> He also said, "Hundreds of thousands of years hence, I don't say there are none, just that they will be few."<sup>5</sup>

Later this (dialogue between Pao Fu and Ch'ang Ch'ing) was quoted to Ching Ch'ing.<sup>6</sup> Ching Ch'ing said, "If it hadn't been Mr. Sun (Pao Fu), then you would have seen skulls covering the fields."<sup>7</sup>

## NOTES

1. These two fellows have fallen into the weeds.
2. He raises a pile of bones on level ground. Just avoid speaking of it. Dig a hole and bury it deep.
3. If you don't have iron eyes or brass eyes, you'll probably be confused. Those with the same disease sympathize with each other. The two men are buried in the same hole.

4. Inevitably Hsueh Tou diminishes people's worth. Still it amounts to something. The bystander wields the double-edged sword.
5. A petty boast; here's another cloud-dwelling saint.
6. There's good, there's bad.
7. Only those on the same path know. The great earth is so vast and desolate it kills people with sadness. When the manservant sees the maidservant, he takes care. Even if Lin Chi and Te Shan appeared, they too would have to take a beating.

#### COMMENTARY

Pao Fu, Ch'ang Ch'ing, and Ching Ch'ing were all successors of Hsueh Feng; these three men attained alike and realized alike, saw alike and heard alike, picked up alike and used alike. With one exit and one entrance, they pressed back and forth one after the other. Since they were men born of the same lineage, as soon as one raised something the others knew where it came down. In Hsueh Feng's congregation it was just these three who always engaged in questioning and answering. Whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, the ancients were mindful of this path; that is why as soon as it is brought up, they know where it comes down.

One day when he was wandering in the mountains Pao Fu pointed with his hand and said, "Right here is the summit of the mystic peak." When Ch'an men these days are questioned this way, then they only frown; fortunately it was Ch'ang Ch'ing who was asked. Tell me, when Pao Fu spoke this way, what was his purpose? When the ancient Pao Fu acted like this, he wanted to test whether Ch'ang Ch'ing had eyes or not.

Ch'ang Ch'ing was a man of his house, so naturally he knew what Pao Fu was getting at; thus he replied to him by saying, "Indeed it is. What a pity!" But tell me, when Ch'ang Ch'ing spoke this way, what was his meaning? You can't always go on this way. Though there are those who seem so, (actually) there is rarely anyone at ease without the slightest concern. Fortunately Ch'ang Ch'ing understood Pao Fu completely.

Hsueh Tou added a word saying, "Today, travelling the mountains with these fellows, what is the purpose?" Tell me, where does this come down? Again he said, "Hundreds of thousands of years hence, I don't say there are none, just that

they will be few." Hsueh Tou knows how to point to himself. This is just like Huang Po's saying, "I don't say that there is no Ch'an, just that there are no teachers." Hsueh Tou speaking this way is also undeniably dangerous and steep. If Hsueh Tou hadn't answered back with the same voice, how could it have been this unique and marvelous? This is called an added comment; it comes down on both sides, but though it comes down on both sides, it doesn't remain on either side.

Later this was quoted to Ching Ch'ing. He said, "If it hadn't been Mr. Sun, then you would have seen skulls covering the fields." Sun is Ch'ang Ch'ing's lay surname. Haven't you heard how a monk asked Chao Chou, "What is the lone summit of the mystic peak?" Chou said, "I won't answer this question of yours." The monk asked, "Why won't you answer this question?" Chou said, "I fear that if I answered you, you would fall onto the level ground."

In the teachings it says that the mendicant Meghasri always stayed on the lone summit of the peak of wonder; he never came down from the mountain. Sudhana went to call on him and searched for seven days without encountering him. But then one day they met on a separate peak. When he had seen him, Meghasri explained for Sudhana that the three worlds are a moment of thought and the wisdom and illumination of all the Buddhas, the gate of Dharma that appears everywhere. Given that Meghasri never came down from the mountain, why then did they meet on a separate peak? If you say Meghasri must have come down from the mountain, yet in the teachings it says that he never did come down from the mountain, that he was always on the solitary summit of the peak of wonder. At this point, where are Meghasri and Sudhana really?

Later, Elder Li created some complications, and made up a verse quite well:

*The lone summit of the mystic peak  
Is the teaching of one-flavor equanimity.  
Each and every one—they're all real;  
Each and every one—they're all complete.  
Where there's no gain and no loss,  
No affirmation and no negation,  
There it stands alone revealed;  
Therefore Sudhana couldn't see him.*

When you get to the point of merging with nature, it's like "the eye does not see itself, the ear does not hear itself, the finger does not feel itself; it's like a sword doesn't cut itself, fire does not burn itself." At this point there are many instances of compassionate assistance in the teachings; this is why they let down a single path, and in methods of the secondary truth set up host and guest, devices and objects, questions and answers. Thus it is said, "The Buddhas have not appeared in the world, nor is there any nirvana. They manifest such things as expedient means to rescue sentient beings."

But tell me, in the end, how will you avoid Ching Ch'ing and Hsueh Tou talking as they did? If they hadn't been able to clap along in unison at that time, that would have been why "human skulls cover the fields all over the world." Ch'ang Ch'ing comes up with this testimony, and both Pao Fu and Ch'ang Ch'ing use it this way. Afterwards, Hsueh Tou comes out with a verse even more brilliant. The verse says,

#### VERSE

*On the lone summit of the mystic peak, weeds grow in profusion;*

*\*\*You lose your body too. (The weeds) are already several fathoms deep beneath your feet.\**

*Clearly it is brought up—to be given to whom?*

*\*\*And used for what! There's no one on earth who knows. A dry piece of shit; what is it good for! You've got your nostrils, but lost your mouth.<sup>a</sup>\**

*If it hadn't been Mr. Sun discerning the real point,*

*\*\*Wrong! Watch the arrow! He's caught the thief Without even realizing it.\**

*Skulls would cover the ground, but how many people would know?*

*\*\*They won't live again. They're numerous as hemp or millet seeds. You've got the nostrils but lost the mouth, Reverend.\**

## COMMENTARY

"On the lone summit of the mystic peak, weeds grow in profusion." If you roll around in the weeds, when will you ever have done? "Clearly it is brought up—to be given to whom?" Where is the clarity? This praises Pao Fu saying, "Right here is the summit of the mystic peak."

"If it hadn't been Mr. Sun discerning the real point." What truth did Mr. Sun see that he could say, "So it is. What a pity!?" As for "Skulls would cover the ground, but how many people would know?" Do all you people know? Blind!

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. "Getting the nostrils, but losing the mouth" connotes getting something vital but at the same time losing something else equally necessary by focussing exclusively on the first objective.

# Kuei Shan and Iron Grindstone Liu

## POINTER

Stand on the summit of the highest peak, and demons and outsiders cannot know you; walk on the bottom of the deepest sea, and even the Buddha's eye cannot catch sight of you. Even if your eyes are like shooting stars and your intellect is like flashing lightning, still you won't avoid (being like) the spirit tortoise dragging his tail (leaving traces.) At this point, what is proper? To test, I'm citing this: Look!

## CASE

Iron Grindstone Liu arrived at Kuei Shan.<sup>1</sup> Kuei Shan said, "Old cow, so you've come!"<sup>2</sup>

The Grindstone said, "Tomorrow there's a great communal feast on T'ai Shan; are you going to go, Teacher?"<sup>3</sup>

Kuei Shan relaxed his body and lay down;<sup>4</sup> the Grindstone immediately left.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. Unavoidably it'll be hard to stay there. This old lady is out of her depth.
2. Check! A probing pole, a reed shade. Where should you look to see the obscurity?
3. The arrow is not shot to no purpose. In China they beat the drum, in Korea they dance. The letting go was too fast, the gathering in is too slow.
4. The arrow got him. Where will you see Kuei Shan? Who realizes that in the far-off misty waves there is another more excellent realm of thought?
5. She's gone. She saw the opportunity and acted.

## COMMENTARY

The nun 'Iron Grindstone' Liu was like a stone-struck spark, like a lightening flash; hesitate and you lose your body and your life. In the path of meditation, if you get to the most essential place, where are there so many things? This meeting of adepts is like seeing horns on the other side of a wall and immediately knowing there's an ox, like seeing smoke on the other side of a mountain and immediately knowing there's a fire. When pushed they move, when pressed they turn about.

Kuei Shan said, "After I die, I'll go down the mountain to an alms-giver's house and be a water buffalo. On my left flank five words will be written, saying, 'A Kuei Shan monk, me.' At that time, would it be right to call it a Kuei Shan monk, or would it be right to call it a water buffalo?" When people these days are questioned about this, they are stymied and can't explain.

Iron Grindstone Liu had studied for a long time; her active edge was sharp and dangerous. People called her "Iron Grindstone Liu." She built a hut a few miles from Kuei Mountain. One day she went to call on Kuei Shan. When he saw her coming, he said, "Old cow, so you've come." The Grindstone said, "Tomorrow there's a great communal feast on Mt. T'ai; are you going to go, Teacher?" Kuei Shan relaxed his body and lay down, whereupon the Grindstone left. All of you look—throughout they seemed to be conversing, but this is not Ch'an, neither is it Tao. Can it be understood by calling it unconcern?

Kuei Shan is over six hundred miles from Mt. T'ai; how then did Iron Grindstone Liu want to have Kuei Shan go to the feast? Tell me, what was her meaning? This old lady understands Kuei Shan's conversation: fiber coming, thread going, one letting go, one gathering in; they answer back to each other like two mirrors reflecting each other, without any reflection image to be seen. Action to action, they complement each other; phrase to phrase, they accord.

People these days can be poked three times and not turn their heads, but this old lady couldn't be fooled one little bit. By no means is this an emotional view based on mundane truth; like a bright mirror on its stand, like a bright jewel in the palm of the hand, when a foreigner comes, a foreigner is reflected, and when a native comes a native is reflected. It's that



she knows there is something transcendent; that's why she acts like this.

Right now you are content to understand this as unconcern. Master Yen of Wu Tsu said, "Don't take having concerns as not having concerns; time and time again concern is born of unconcern." If you can immerse yourself in this and penetrate through, you will see that Kuei Shan and Iron Grindstone Liu acting in this way is the same sort as ordinary people's conversation. People are often hindered by the words, that's why they don't understand. Only an intimate acquaintance can understand them thoroughly.

It's like Ch'ien Feng teaching his assembly saying, "If you raise one, you shouldn't raise two; let the first move go and you fall into the secondary." Yun Men came forward and said, "Yesterday there was a monk who came from T'ien T'ai and returned to Nan Yueh." Ch'ien Feng said, "Chief cook, don't participate in the general labor today."

Observe these two, Liu and Kuei Shan; when letting go, both let go, and when gathering in, both gather in. In the Kuei-Yang tradition, this is called "merging of perspectives."

In the wind-blown dust the grasses move; thoroughly comprehend the whole from the surface. This is also called "a phrase which hinders one"—the meaning is conveyed but the words obstruct. When you get here, you must be able to sweep to the left and turn to the right; then you are an adept.

#### VERSE

*Once riding an iron horse she entered the fortress;  
 \*\*An adept accustomed to battle. Beyond the borders  
 is the general's place. She's equipped with the  
 seven items.<sup>a</sup>\**

*The edict comes down reporting that the six nations are  
 cleared.*

*\*\*A dog carries the amnesty in its mouth. In the heart of  
 the realm is the emperor's place. What about (the fact  
 that) the sea is calm, the rivers clear?\**

*Still holding the golden whip, she questions the returning  
 traveller;*

*\*\*What's the news? Two people are supported by a single staff. They call to each other, going together and coming together.\**

*In the depths of the night, who will go along to walk the royal road?*

*\*\*You're headed southeast, I'm headed northwest. But tell me, why go?\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou's verses are universally considered the best of their kind. Among the hundred verses this one verse is the most logical, among them it is the most wondrously arrayed and clearly set out.

"Once, riding an iron horse, she entered the fortress." This praises Iron Grindstone Liu coming as she did to Kuei Shan. "The edict comes down, reporting that the six nations are cleared." This praises the way Kuei Shan questioned her. "Still holding the golden whip, she questions the returning traveler." This praises the Grindstone saying, "Tomorrow there's a great communal feast on T'ai Shan; are you going to go, Teacher?" "In the depths of the night, who will go along to walk the royal road?" This praises Kuei Shan relaxing his body and the Iron Grindstone immediately leaving.

Hsueh Tou has this kind of ability: where they hurry he praises their hurrying, and where they are easygoing he praises their being easygoing. Feng Hsueh too once commented on this case, and his meaning was the same as Hsueh Tou's; people all over praise this verse:

*Standing on the summit of the highest peak,  
Unknown to demons and outsiders;  
Walking on the bottom of the deepest sea,  
Unseen even by Buddhas' eyes.*

Look at Kuei Shan and Liu: one relaxed his body and lay down, one immediately left. If you go on wandering around, you won't ever be able to find the road. The meaning of Hsueh Tou's verse is most excellent. If he didn't have the same at-

tainment and the same realization, how could he be capable of this? But say, what meaning was attained?

Haven't you heard how a monk asked Feng Hsueh, "When Kuei Shan said, 'Old cow, so you've come!' what was his inner meaning?" Feng Hsueh said, "In the depths of the white clouds the golden dragon leaps." The monk asked, "When Iron Grindstone Liu said, 'Tomorrow there's a great communal feast on T'ai Shan; are you going to go, Teacher?' what was her inner meaning?" Hsueh said, "In the heart of the blue waves the Jade Rabbit bolts." The monk asked, "When Kuei Shan immediately lay down, what was his inner meaning?" Hsueh said, "Old and worn-out, decrepit and lazy, days without concern; lying idly deep in sleep, facing the blue mountains." This meaning too is the same as Hsueh Tou's.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The seven items of a teacher are: 1) great capacity and great function; 2) swiftness of wit and eloquence; 3) wondrous spirituality of speech; 4) the active edge to kill or bring life; 5) wide learning and broad experience; 6) clarity of mirroring awareness; and 7) freedom to appear or disappear. In light of the military metaphor of the verse, it should also be noted that "the seven items" can also refer to a warrior's equipment.

# The Hermit of Lotus Flower Peak Holds up His Staff

## POINTER

If your potential does not leave (its fixed) position, you tumble down into the poison sea. If your words don't startle the crowd, you fall into the streams of the commonplace.

Suddenly, if you can distinguish initiate from lay in the light of sparks struck from stone, if you can decide between killing and giving life in the light of a flash of lightning, then you can cut off the ten directions and tower up like a thousand fathom wall.

But do you know that such a time exists? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

The hermit of Lotus Flower Peak held up his staff and showed it to the assembly saying,<sup>1</sup> "When the ancients got here, why didn't they consent to stay here?"<sup>2</sup>

There was no answer from the assembly,<sup>3</sup> so he himself answered for them, "Because they did not gain strength on the road."<sup>4</sup>

Again he said, "In the end, how is it?"<sup>5</sup> And again he himself answered in their place, "With my staff across my shoulder, I pay no heed to people—I go straight into the myriad peaks."<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. Look! He has the one eye on his forehead. Still, this is a nest for people these days.
2. You can't drive stakes into empty space. Provisionally the hermit sets up an illusionary city (to teach).

3. A thousand, ten thousand, (numerous as) hemp and millet. They've attained a little, though. What a pity! Swift falcons on a roost.
4. If you go to the road to discern this, you'll still be struggling for half a month's journey. Even if you gain strength, what's it good for? How could there be none at all?
5. A thousand people, ten thousand people, are sitting right here. Among a thousand or ten thousand people, one or two will understand.
6. Still, he deserves thirty blows, because he's carrying a board on his shoulder. If you see cheeks on the back of his head, don't go along with him.

#### COMMENTARY

Can all of you judge the hermit of Lotus Flower Peak? His feet still aren't touching the ground. Early in Sung times he built a hut on T'ien T'ai's Lotus Flower Peak. After they had attained the Path, the ancients would dwell in thatched huts or stone grottos, boiling the roots of wild greens in broken legged pots, passing the days. They didn't seek fame and fortune: unconcerned, they accorded to conditions. They would impart a turning word, wanting to repay the benevolence of the buddhas and patriarchs and transmit the Buddha Mind Seal.

As soon as he saw a monk coming, the hermit would hold up his staff and say, "When the ancients got here, why didn't they consent to stay here?" For more than twenty years, there was never even one person who could answer. This one question has both provisional and true, both illumination and function. If you know his snare, it isn't worth taking hold of.

But tell me, why did he ask this question for twenty years? Since this is the action of a master of the school, why did he just keep to one peg? If you can see here, naturally you won't be running in the dusts of the senses.

During the course of twenty years, there were quite a few people who laid out their remarks to the hermit to present their views, trying all their clever devices. Even if someone could speak of it, still he did not reach the place of the hermit's ultimate point. Moreover, although this matter is not in words and phrases, if not for words and phrases, it could not be distin-

guished. Haven't you heard it said: "The Path is fundamentally without words. We use words to reveal the Path"? Therefore the essential point in testing others is to know them intimately the minute they open their mouths.

The ancient man let down a word or half a phrase for no other purpose than to see whether or not you know that 'this matter exists.' He saw that the people did not understand; that is why he himself answered for them, "Because they did not gain strength on the road." See how what he says spontaneously accords with principles and meshes with the circumstances. When did he ever lose the essential meaning? The ancient Shih T'ou said, "When you receive words you must understand the source: don't set up standards on your own."

When people these days bump into it, they think that's enough. Though they get to it, what can be done about their fat headedness and confusion? When they come before an adept, he uses the three essential seals<sup>a</sup>—sealing space, sealing water, sealing mud—to test them. Then the adept sees whether the square peg is stuck in the round hole with no way to come down.

When the time comes where, will you search to look for one here with the same attainment and realization? If it's a person who knows that 'this matter exists,' then open your heart and convey the message. What is there that can be wrong? If you don't meet with such a person, then keep it to yourself for the time being.

Now I ask all of you: the staff is something patchrobed monks ordinarily use; why then does the hermit say that they didn't gain strength on the road? Why does he say that when the ancients got here, they didn't consent to stay here? In truth, though gold dust is precious, when it falls into your eyes it becomes a blinding obstruction.

Master Shan Tao of the Stone Grotto, when he was subject to the persecution (of 845) would always take his staff and show it to the assembly saying, "All the buddhas of the past are thus, all the buddhas of the future are thus, all the buddhas of the present are thus."

One day in front of the monk's hall Hsueh Feng held up his staff and showed it to the crowd saying, "This one is just for people of medium and low faculties." At the time there was a monk who came forward and asked, "When you unexpectedly

encounter someone of the highest potential, then what?" Feng picked up his staff and left. Yun Men said, "I'm not like Hsueh Feng when it comes to breaking up confusion." A monk asked, "How would you do it, Teacher?" Yun Men immediately hit him.

Whenever you study and ask questions, there aren't so many things to be concerned with. (Concerns arise) because outside you perceive that mountains and rivers and the great earth exist; within you perceive that seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing exist; above you see that there are various buddhas that can be sought; and below you see that there are sentient beings who can be saved. You must simply spit them all out at once: afterwards, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, twenty-four hours a day, you fuse everything into one. Then, though you're on the tip of a hair, it's as broad as the universe; though you dwell in a boiling cauldron or in furnace embers, it's like being in the land of peace and happiness; though you dwell amidst gems and jewels in profusion, it's like being in a thatched hut. For this kind of thing, if you are a competent adept, you get to the one reality naturally, without wasting any effort.

The hermit saw that no one could reach his depths, so again he pressed them saying, "In the end, how is it?" Again they couldn't deal with him. He himself said, "With my staff across my shoulder, I pay no heed to people—I go straight into the myriad peaks." Again, what is the meaning of this? Tell me, what place is he pointing to as his whereabouts? Undeniably, there are eyes in his words, but his meaning is outside the words. He gets up by himself, he falls down by himself; he lets go by himself, he gathers up by himself.

Haven't you heard: The venerable Yen Yang met a monk on the road. He raised his staff and said, "What's this?" The monk said, "I don't know." Yen Yang said, "You don't even recognize a staff?" Again he took his staff and poked the ground saying, "Do you recognize this?" The monk said, "No, I don't." Yen Yang said, "You don't even recognize a hole in the ground?" Again, he put his staff across his shoulder and said, "Do you understand?" The monk said, "I don't understand." Yen Yang said, "With my staff across my shoulder, I pay no heed to people—I go straight into the myriad peaks." When the ancients got here, why didn't they agree to stay here?

Hsueh Tou has a verse which says:

Who,  
 Confronting the situation,  
 Brings it up without deception;  
 Such a person is rare:  
 He destroys the steep lofty peaks,  
 He melts down the mysterious subtlety.  
 The double barrier has been wide open:  
 Adepts do not return together.  
 The Jade Rabbit—now round, now partial  
 The Golden Raven seems to fly without flying.<sup>b</sup>  
 Old Lu doesn't know where he's going—  
 To go along together as before with white clouds  
 and flowing streams.

Why did I say, "If you see cheeks on the back of his head, don't go along with him"? As soon as you make a comparative judgment, you're in the demon cave of the mountain of darkness making your living. If you can see all the way through and your faith is thoroughgoing, then naturally a thousand or ten thousand people won't be able to trap you or do anything about you. When pushed or pressed, you will kill or give life spontaneously.

Hsueh Tou understood the hermit's meaning when he said, "I go straight into the myriad peaks." At that point he begins to make his verse. If you want to know where this is at, look at Hsueh Tou's verse.

#### VERSE

*Dust and sand in his eyes, dirt in his ears,*  
*\*\*Blocked up with tons of dirt. What limit is there to the*  
*confusion? There are other such people.\**  
*He doesn't consent to stay in the myriad peaks.*  
*\*\*Where will you go? But say, what scene is this?\**  
*Falling flowers, flowing streams, very vast.*  
*\*\*A good scene. With the lightning flash intellect, if you*  
*vainly toil tarrying in thought, look to the left—a*



*thousand lives; look to the right—ten thousand eons. \**

*Suddenly raising my eyebrows (to look)—where has he gone?*

*\*\*Right beneath your feet another pair of eyes is given to you. From the beginning he's just been right here.*

*Have you cut off the hermit's footsteps! Although it's like this, it's still necessary to get to this realm to begin to attain. I'll hit, saying, "Why is he just right here?"*

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou versifies very well: he has a place to turn around in and doesn't stick to one corner. Immediately he says, "Dust and sand in his eyes, dirt in his ears." This one line praises the hermit of Lotus Flower Peak. When patchrobed monks get here, they have nothing above to cling to or venerate, and below they have no personal selves: at all times they are like fools and dunces. Haven't you read of Nan Ch'uan saying, "Among men of the Path, those that are like fools and dullards are hard to come by." Ch'an Yueh's poem says, "I often recall Nan Ch'uan's fine words/Such fools and dullards are indeed rare." Fa Teng said, "What man knows the meaning of this? He makes me think back to Nan Ch'uan." Nan Ch'uan also said, "The seven hundred eminent monks (at the Fifth Patriarch's place) were all men who understood the Buddhist Teachings. There was only Workman Lu who didn't understand the Buddhist Teachings. He just understood the Path: that's why he obtained the Patriarch's robe and bowl." Tell me, how far apart are the Buddhist Teachings and the Path?

Hsueh Tou brought up this saying of Nan Ch'uan's and said, "Sand can't get in his eyes, and water can't get in his ears. If there is a fellow whose faith is thoroughgoing and who can hold fast, he isn't deceived by others. (For such a man) what a bunch of meaningless noises are the verbal teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs! So I invite you to hang up your bowl and bag, break your travelling staff, and just become an unconcerned man of the Path."

Hsueh Tou also said, "Mount Sumeru can be put in his eyes, the waters of the great ocean can be put in his ears. There is a kind of fellow who accepts people's haggling discussions and

the verbal teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs like a dragon reaching the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. He must pick up his bowl and bag and put his staff across his shoulder. He too is an unconcerned man of the Path."

Hsueh Tou also said, "Neither way will do; after all, there is no connection."

Among the three unconcerned men of the Path (that Hsueh Tou has described), if you would choose one man to be your teacher, the correct choice is this kind of cast iron fellow. Why? Whether he encounters environments of evil or of wonders, to him what he faces is all like a dream. He doesn't know there are six senses, nor does he know there is sunrise and sunset. Even if you get to this realm, you must not cling to the cold ashes of a dead fire, you must not plunge into the flood of darkness. You still must have a way to turn around before you attain. Haven't you read of an ancient saying, "Don't cling to the greenness of the strange plants on the cold cliff. If you cut off the white clouds, the source is not marvellous."

Thus the hermit of Lotus Flower Peak said, "It's because they didn't gain strength on the road." To get it you simply must go into the myriad peaks. But say, what is being called "the myriad peaks"?

Hsueh Tou just likes him saying, "With my staff across my shoulder, I pay no heed to people—I go straight into the myriad peaks." Therefore he comes out with the verse. But tell me, where does he go? Is there anyone who knows where he goes?

"Falling flowers, flowing streams, very vast." Falling flowers in profusion, flowing streams vast, endless. For the lightning flash mind, what is before the eyes?

"Suddenly raising my eyebrows to look—where has he gone?" Why doesn't Hsueh Tou know where he's gone either? It's just like me raising my whisk just now: tell me, where is it now? If all of you people can see, you're studying with the hermit of Lotus Flower Peak. If not, go back to your places and try to investigate and observe carefully.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The three seals: Sealing mud, for the lower sort, who considers that something has been attained and leaves traces. Sealing water,

for the middling sort, for whom there is something attained and the understanding mind still remains, but who leaves no traces. Sealing space, for the superior ones, who attain without attainment and leave no traces.

- b. The Jade Rabbit is the moon; the Golden Raven is the sun.

# Pai Chang's Sitting Alone on Ta Hsiung Mountain

## CASE

A monk asked Pai Chang, "What's the extraordinary affair?"<sup>1</sup>  
Chang said, "Sitting alone on Ta Hsiung Mountain."<sup>2</sup>  
The monk bowed;<sup>3</sup> Chang thereupon hit him.<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. There's an echo in the words. He demonstrates his ability in a phrase. He flabbergasts people. Though this monk has eyes, he's never seen.
2. His awesome majestic air extends over the whole country. The one standing and the one sitting both are defeated.
3. A clever patchrobed monk! There still is such a man who wants to see such things.
4. Chang is a competent teacher of our school: why does he not speak much? The imperative is not carried out vainly.

## COMMENTARY

He has the eye to face situations and not heed danger or death. Thus it is said, "How can you catch tiger cubs without entering the tiger's lair?" Pai Chang was ordinarily like a tiger with wings. Nor does this monk shun birth and death: he dares to grab the tiger's whiskers and asks, "What's the extraordinary affair?" This monk too has eyes. Pai Chang immediately took up the burden with him saying, "Sitting alone on Ta Hsiung Mountain." The monk then bowed. Patchrobed monks must be able to discern the meaning before the question.

This monk's bowing was not the same as ordinary bowing: he had to have eyes before he could do this. He didn't spill all his guts to others. Though they knew each other, they acted like they didn't.

As for "A monk asked Pai Chang, 'What's the extraordinary affair?' Chang said, 'Sitting alone on Ta Hsiung Mountain.' The monk bowed; then Chang hit him": observe how when they let go, they both do so at once, and when they gather back, they wipe away the tracks and obliterate the traces. But say, when the monk bowed right then, what was his meaning? If you say it was good, then why and for what did Pai Chang then hit him? If you say it was no good, what was wrong about his bowing? When you get here, you must be able to tell right from wrong, distinguish initiate from outsider, and stand on the summits of a thousand peaks, to begin to understand.

This monk's bowing was like grabbing the tiger's whiskers: he was just contending for a pivotal position. Fortunately there's an eye on Pai Chang's forehead and a talisman behind his elbow, shining through the four quarters and profoundly discerning oncoming winds. Therefore he immediately hit the monk. If it had been someone else, he wouldn't have been able to handle the monk. The monk met mind with mind, conveyed intention with intention: that is why he bowed.

Nan Ch'uan said, "Last night at midnight, Manjusri and Samantabhadra came up with views of Buddha and Dharma. I gave them each twenty blows and sentenced them to be hemmed in by twin iron mountains." At the time Chao Chou came forward and said, "Who should take your beating, Teacher?" Nan Ch'uan said, "Where was my fault?" Chou bowed.

Masters of our school do not idly observe how the other takes action. The moment they are in charge of the situation and bring it into play, they are naturally leaping with life.

My late teacher Wu Tsu would often say, "It's like coming to grips in the front lines." I'm always telling you simply to cut off seeing and hearing, form and sound, all at once—then you'll be able to hold fast and act with mastery. Only then will you see Pai Chang. But tell me, how about when letting go? Look at Hsueh Tou's verse:

## VERSE

*In the realm of the patriarchs gallops the heavenly colt.*

*\*\* (Such a man) is born once in five hundred years.*

*Among a thousand or ten thousand people there's one  
or a half. The son (Pai Chang) takes up the father's (Ma  
Tsu's) work. \**

*Among expedients rolling out and rolling up are not the same  
path—*

*\*\* Already so before the words. Pai Chang gains inde-  
pendence: it's a matter of his adepts' methods. \**

*In a flash of lightning or sparks struck from stone he retains  
the ability to change with circumstances.*

*\*\* He came head-on, turning to the left, turning to the  
right. Do you see where Pai Chang helps people or  
not? \**

*How laughable—a man comes to grab the tiger's whiskers!*

*\*\* He deserves thirty blows. Where there's a great re-  
ward, there must be a valiant man. He doesn't avoid  
losing his body and his life. I leave this move to  
you . . . \**

## COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou can see all the way through: thus he can come out with the verse. The heavenly colt runs a thousand miles in a day, runs back and forth and up and down, gallops as though flying: thus he is called the heavenly colt. Hsueh Tou is praising Pai Chang—in the territory of the patriarchs he runs from east to west and from west to east, a single coming, a single going, free in all directions, totally without the slightest hindrance, just like the heavenly colt. He was well able to gallop: only thus can we see how free he is. This is because he attained Ma Tsu's great ability and great function.

Haven't you heard? A monk asked Ma Tsu, "What is the great meaning of the Buddhist Teachings?" Tsu then hit him and said, "If I didn't hit you, all the people in the world would be laughing at me." Again, the monk asked, "What is the

meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Tsu said, "Come here and I'll tell you." The monk approached and Tsu boxed his ears saying, "Six listeners don't draw the same conclusions (as to what was said.)" Observe how Ma Tsu attained the great independence in such fashion: within the gate of expedients, sometimes he rolls out, sometimes he rolls up. Sometimes the rolling out isn't in the rolling up, sometimes the rolling up isn't in the rolling out. Sometimes rolling out and rolling up both aren't there. Hence the saying, "On the same path but not in the same groove."

Hsueh Tou says, "In a flash of lightning or sparks struck from stone he retains the ability to change with circumstances." This praises the monk for being like sparks struck from stone, like the brilliance of a flash of lightning—it's just a matter of a bit of changing with the situation. Yen T'ou said, "Turning away from things is superior; pursuing things is inferior. In battle each man occupies a pivotal position." Hsueh Tou said, "The wheel of potential has never turned. If it turns, it surely must go both ways." And if it can't be turned, what's the use? Even powerful men must know a little of changing with circumstances. People these days just offer (their teacher) their true feelings and get their nostrils pierced by him. What end will there be?

This monk was able in the midst of lightning flashes and sparks to retain the ability to change with the situation, so he bowed. Hsueh Tou says, "How laughable—a man comes to grab the tiger's whiskers!" Pai Chang was like a tiger—how laughable that this monk went to grab the tiger's whiskers.

# Yun Men's The Body Exposed, The Golden Wind

## POINTER

Ask one, answer ten. Raise one, understand three. Seeing the rabbit he looses the falcon—he uses the wind to fan the flame—he doesn't spare his eyebrows.

This I leave aside for the moment. How is it when entering the tiger's lair? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?"<sup>1</sup>

Yun Men said, "Body exposed in the golden wind."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. What season is this? When the family breaks up, the people perish; when the people perish, the family breaks up.
2. He holds up the sky and supports the earth. He cuts nails and shears through iron. Clean and naked, bare and purified. Walking with even steps through the blue sky.

## COMMENTARY

If you can comprehend here, then you begin to see where Yun Men helped people. Otherwise, if you still can't, as before you'll be pointing to a deer and calling it a horse: your eyes are blind, your ears are deaf. Who arrives at this realm?

Tell me, do you think Yun Men answered the monk's question, or do you think he was harmonizing with him? If you say



he answered his question, you are wrongly sticking to the zero point of a scale. If you say he harmonized with him, this has nothing to do with it. Since it's not this way, ultimately, how is it? If you can see all the way through, patchrobed monks' nostrils are not worth a pinch. Otherwise, if you still can't, as before you'll plunge into the ghost cave.

In general, to uphold and establish the vehicle of our sect, you must take up the burden with your entire being and not fear for your eyebrows, you must stretch out in the tiger's mouth and allow others to pull you back and forth and drag you down. If you're not like this, how will you be able to help people?

This monk posed a question that was indeed dangerous and lofty. If you look at him in ordinary terms, he just seems to be a monk involved in idle concerns. If you go by the traditions of patchrobed monks, when you go into his life line and look, then he undeniably has something marvellous about him. But say, when the tree withers and the leaves fall off, whose realm is this? In Fen Yang's scheme of eighteen kinds of questions, this is called "a question to test the host." It is also called "a question that uses things."

Yun Men did not stir a hairsbreadth, but just said to him, "Body exposed in the golden wind." He answered most wondrously, and without presuming to turn his back on the monk's question either. Since his question had eyes, Yun Men's answer too was straight to the point. An ancient said, "If you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with a question." If you really know someone, you know what he's getting at as soon as he mentions it. If you go to the vein of Yun Men's words to look, you've immediately gone wrong. It's just that in his phrases Yun Men was often wont to provoke people's emotional interpretations. If I made up emotional interpretations to understand him, I wouldn't avoid being bereft of my successors.

Yun Men liked to ride the thief's horse to pursue the thief in this way. Haven't you heard: a monk asked him, "What is that which is not within reach of thought?" Men said, "Impossible for cognition to fathom." This monk asked, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Men said, "Body exposed in the golden wind." In his words he unstoppably seizes and cuts off the essential bridge and doesn't let ordinary or saintly

through. You must understand how Yun Men raises one and illuminates three, raises three and illuminates one. If you go to his three phrases to seek, then you're pulling an arrow out of the back of your head. In a single phrase of Yun Men's, three phrases are inevitably present: the phrase that contains heaven and earth, the phrase that follows the waves and pursues the currents, and the phrase that cuts off the myriad streams. (What he says) is naturally exactly appropriate. But tell me, of the three phrases, which one does Yun Men use to receive people? Try to discern this.

The verse says:

#### VERSE

*Since the question has the source,*

*\*\*Hsueh Tou profoundly discerns the oncoming wind.  
The arrow is not shot in vain.\**

*The answer too is in the same place.*

*\*\*How could there be two? Yun Men is like a bell waiting to be struck. His efforts are not expended excessively.\**

*Three phrases should be distinguished:*

*\*\*Above, between, below. Which phrase is his answer here? First you must comprehend outside of the three phrases.\**

*An arrowpoint flies far into the void.*

*\*\*On target! It's gone by. Hitting, striking. The arrow flies past Korea.\**

*Over the great plains—chilling windblasts howling, wailing,*

*\*\*Throughout the heavens, all over the earth. Do you feel your hairs standing on end? He's let go.\**

*In the eternal sky—intermittent misty rains.*

*\*\*The winds are great, the waters vast. Above your heads, boundless vastness; below your feet, boundless vastness.\**

*Haven't you seen the traveller sitting so long at Shao Lin, who hasn't returned?*

*\*\*Here's another dunce. He's gotten others involved. The Yellow River flows turbid from its source.\**

*Tranquil up on Bear Ears Mountain, a single gathering.*

*\*\*Open your eyes and you see, shut your eyes and you see too. Making a living in the ghost cave. Your eyes are blind, your ears are deaf. Who arrives at this realm? You don't avoid smashing your gap-teeth.\**

#### COMMENTARY

The ancient man Shih T'ou said, "When you receive words, you must understand the source. Don't set up standards on your own." The ancient man's words were not empty talk. Hence it is said, "In general to ask about this affair you must have some knowledge of right and wrong. If you don't know noble from base behavior, if you can't recognize pure and defiled, if you let your mouth speak at random, what will be the gain?"

Whenever one utters words and spews out breath, it must be like clamps, like tongs, it must have hooks and chains, it must have unbroken continuity. This monk's question had the source meaning: Yun Men's answer was also this way. Yun Men always taught people with three phrases (in one): this is his ultimate pattern.

Hsueh Tou's verse on this case is similar in kind to his verse on the (eighty-second) case, about Ta Lung. "Three phrases should be distinguished." Three phrases are inevitably present in each phrase of Yun Men's. If you can distinguish them, then you penetrate beyond the three phrases. "An arrowpoint flies far into the void." He shot it so far that you must set your eyes on it quickly to catch sight of it. And if you can see it clearly, you can open out the universe in a single phrase.

At this point the verse is completed, but Hsueh Tou has extra talent so he opens out and says, "Over the great plains—chilling windblasts howling, wailing/In the eternal sky—intermittent misty rains." Tell me, is this mind or is this object? Is this mysterious or is this wondrous? An ancient said, "The truth of things is not hidden—from ancient times till now it's always been obvious."

The monk asked, "What's it like when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Yun Men said, "Body exposed in the golden wind." Hsueh Tou's intent was just to create a single environment. What's in front of your eyes right now, the whistling

wind, is either the southeast wind or the northwest wind. It will be all right only if you understand Hsueh Tou's meaning this way. If you go further and understand it as Ch'an or Tao, this has nothing to do with it.

"Haven't you seen the traveller sitting so long at Shao Lin, who hasn't returned?" Before he returned to the West Bodhidharma sat facing a wall for nine years, utterly silent. But say, is this "the tree withers, the leaves fall"? Is this "body exposed in the golden wind"? If here all past and present fools and sages, sky, earth, and the great world are all fused into one, then you will see how Yun Men and Hsueh Tou really helped people.

"Tranquil up on Bear Ears Mountain, a single gathering." Bear Ears Mountain is Shao Lin on Sung Shan near the Western Capital. In front and behind, the mountains are clustered thickly by the thousands. Where will all of you people see? Do you see where Hsueh Tou helps people? Even if you do, this is still the spirit tortoise dragging his tail (leaving traces).

# Nan Ch'uan's Truth That's Never Been Spoken

## CASE

Nan Ch'uan went to see Master Nirvana of Pai Chang (Mountain.)

Chang asked, "Have all the sages since antiquity had a truth that they haven't spoken for people?"<sup>1</sup>

Ch'uan said, "They have."<sup>2</sup>

Chang said, "What is the truth that hasn't been spoken for people?"<sup>3</sup>

Ch'uan said, "It's not mind, it's not buddha, it's not any thing."<sup>4</sup>

Chang said, "You said it."<sup>5</sup>

Ch'uan said, "I am just thus. What about you, Teacher?"<sup>6</sup>

Chang said, "I am not a great man of knowledge either: how would I know whether it has been spoken or not?"<sup>7</sup>

Ch'uan said, "I don't understand."<sup>8</sup>

Chang said, "I've already spoken too much for you."<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. A master should know. It stands like a wall ten thousand fathoms high. Does Chang feel his teeth falling out?
2. He's fallen into the weeds. Why so brash? Then there is such a thing!
3. Look how his hands are flustered, his feet frantic. He adds error to error. Just try and ask!
4. As it turns out he suffers defeat. After all he indulges quite a bit.
5. Don't explain it all for him: Let him go wrong his whole life. Chang shouldn't speak this way to him.
6. Fortunately he has a place to turn around. With the long, he's long; with the short, he's short. When the reasoning is superior, he goes to it.

7. Look how his hands are flustered, his feet frantic. He hides his body but reveals his shadow. He acts totally dead. There are thorns in the soft mud. Though he acts like this, how could he swindle me?
8. He can only act this way. Luckily he doesn't understand. If you understand I'll immediately break your head open! Fortunately this fellow is just this way.
9. Adding frost on top of snow. Why the dragon's head and snake's tail?

### COMMENTARY

At this point he doesn't use "it's mind" or "it's not mind," nor does he use "not mind" or "not not mind." Even though from head to foot he doesn't have one hair of his eyebrows, still, he's gotten somewhere. Meditation Master Shou calls "it's mind" a revealing-explanation and "it's not mind" a concealing-explanation.

This Master Nirvana is Meditation Master Fa Cheng. Formerly he dwelled as retired abbot in the western hall at Pai Chang: (he had the monks) clear fields for him and (in return) he preached the great meaning for them.

At this time Nan Ch'uan had already seen Ma Tsu, but he was going around to various places to settle (what's right) and pick out (what's wrong.)

When Pai Chang posed this question it was indeed very difficult to respond to. He said, "Have all the sages since antiquity had a truth that they haven't spoken for people?" If it had been me, I would have covered my ears and left. Look at this old fellow's scene of embarrassment. If an adept had seen him asking this way, he would have been able to see through him immediately. But Nan Ch'uan just went by what he had seen, so he said, "They have." This was indeed brash.

Pai Chang then added error to error and followed up behind saying, "What is the truth that hasn't been spoken for people?" Ch'uan said, "It's not mind, it's not buddha, it's not any thing." Greedily gazing at the moon in the sky, this fellow has lost the pearl in the palm of his hand. Chang said, "You said it." Too bad—he explained in full for Nan Ch'uan. At the time I would

have simply brought my staff down across his back to get him to know real pain.

Although it was like this, you tell me, where did he say it? According to Nan Ch'uan's view, it's not mind, it's not buddha, it's not any thing, it's never been spoken. So I ask all of you, why did Pai Chang nevertheless say, "You said it"? And there aren't any tracks or traces in Nan Ch'uan's words. If you say he didn't say it, then why did Pai Chang talk like this?

Nan Ch'uan was a man who could shift and get through, so after this he pressed Pai Chang and said, "I am just thus. What about you, Teacher?" If it had been anyone else, he wouldn't have been able to explain. But Pai Chang was an adept: his answer is undeniably extraordinary. Immediately he said, "I am not a great man of knowledge either: how would I know whether it has been spoken or not?" Nan Ch'uan then said his "I don't understand." He said "I don't understand" while actually he did understand: this is not genuine not understanding. Pai Chang said, "I've already spoken too much for you." But tell me, where did he speak?

If they had been two fellows playing with mud balls, both would have been covered with slime. If both were adepts, they were like bright mirrors in their stands. In fact in the beginning both were adepts; in the end they both let go. If you're a fellow with eyes, you'll judge them clearly. But say, how will you judge them?

Look at Hsueh Tou's verse:

#### VERSE

*Patriarchs and Buddhas never helped people.*

*\*Each guards his own territory. If you have standards,  
hang onto standards. If you keep even a single word in  
your mind, you go to hell fast as an arrow.\**

*Patchrobed monks present and past running neck and neck.*

*\*Having worn out your straw sandals, break your staff  
and hang up your bowl and bag.\**

*When the bright mirrors are on their stands, the range of im-  
ages differs.*

*\*\*They've fallen, they've broken. Come smash the mirror and I'll meet with you.\**

*One by one they all face south and see the northern dipper.*

*\*\*Do you see me astride the buddha hall going out through the mountain gate! In Korea they've gone up to the hall; in China they haven't yet beaten the drum.\**

*The dipper handle is hanging down.*

*\*\*You still don't know where it comes down. Where is it!\**

*There's no place to seek.*

*\*\*Blind men! Too bad! The cup falls to the ground, the plate shatters to pieces.\**

*When you pick up your nostrils, you lose your mouth.*

*\*\*Where did you get news of this? After all, it's so, so I strike!\**

#### COMMENTARY

Old Shakyamuni appeared in the world and in forty-nine years never said a single word. Beginning from the Land of Brilliance, ending at the river Hiranyavati, and for all the time in between, he never spoke a single word. Tell me, was such talk speaking or not? Right now it fills the Dragon Palace and fills the Oceanic Treasurehouse—how can this not be speaking? Haven't you heard Lord of the Mountain Hsiu say:

*The buddhas have not appeared in the world:  
Forty-nine years of talk.  
Bodhidharma didn't come from the West:  
Shao Lin has a wondrous secret.*

Again it's said:

*The buddhas have not appeared in the world,  
Nor is there any truth to be given to people.  
They just were able to observe the hearts of living  
beings,  
Responding to their ills according to circumstances,  
Giving medicines and dispensing prescriptions.*



*Thus we have the twelve part teaching of the Triple Vehicle.*

In fact from ancient times till now, the patriarchs and buddhas have never spoken for people. This very not helping people deserves thoroughgoing investigation. I always say, though I were to add a phrase as sweet as honey, when properly viewed it's just poison. If you bring down your staff across their backs and strike as soon as they blurt something out and push them away, only then are you helping people on an intimate level.

"Patchrobed monks present and past running neck and neck." Everywhere they go they ask questions about is and is not, about buddhas and patriarchs, about facing upwards and facing down. Though they act like this, if they haven't arrived at this realm, they can't do without this questioning.

"When the bright mirrors are on their stands, the range of images differs." With just this one line you can distinguish clearly. An ancient said, "The myriad forms are all the impression of the single truth." Again it's said, "The myriad forms are all perfect within this." The great teacher Shen Hsiu said:

*The body is the tree of enlightenment,  
The mind is like a bright mirror.  
Constantly take care to wipe it clean:  
Don't let it be defiled with dirt and dust.*

(The Fifth Patriarch) said that Shen Hsiu was still outside the gate.<sup>a</sup> When Hsueh Tou talks this way, tell me, is he inside or outside the gate?

You people, each of you has an ancient mirror. All the myriad forms—long, short, square, round—each and every one appears in it. If you go to the longness or shortness to understand, in the end you'll never be able to find it. This is why Hsueh Tou said, "When the bright mirrors are on their stands, the range of images differs."

Instead you must "All face south and see the northern dipper." When you're facing south why are you nevertheless to look at the northern dipper? You'll see where Pai Chang and Nan Ch'uan met only if you can understand this way. These two lines (the third and fourth of the verse) praise Pai Chang pressing and pressing again. Chang said, "I am not a great man

of knowledge either: how would I know whether it has been spoken or not?"

At this point Hsueh Tou's verse has come down into dead water. Fearing people would misunderstand he turned around and picked it up himself, saying, "The dipper handle is hanging down right now before your eyes: where else will you go to look for it? As soon as you pick up your nostrils you lose your mouth." Hsueh Tou has picked up the nostrils and lost the mouth.<sup>b</sup>

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen asked the members of his congregation to submit verses demonstrating their attainment, so that he could choose his successor and pass on the robe and bowl. Of the more than seven hundred disciples, none felt he could outdo Shen Hsiu, who was considered the foremost among them: thus only Shen Hsiu offered a verse. The Fifth Patriarch praised his verse and had it written on a wall for the congregation to learn and recite. Hui Neng, an illiterate workman in the congregation, happened to hear Shen Hsiu's verse being recited: knowing that Shen's verse reflected a lack of true understanding, he had a boy write another verse on the wall:

*Fundamentally enlightenment is not a tree,*

*Nor is the mind-mirror a mirror.*

*From the beginning there hasn't been a single thing—*

*What's the use of wiping away dust?*

When the Fifth Patriarch saw this, he made as if to disapprove, so that the monks of his congregation would not become jealous of Hui Neng, a layman and a barbarian. He came secretly to Hui Neng and handed on the robe and bowl to him, sealing him as the Sixth Patriarch.

- b. This means to gain one thing, but at the same time to lose something else equally vital.

# Ta Sui's It Goes Along with It

## POINTER

When fish swim through, the water is muddied; when birds fly by, feathers drop down. He clearly discriminates host and guest, he penetratingly distinguishes initiate and outsider, just like a bright mirror in its stand, like bright pearl in the palm of the hand. When a native comes, a native is reflected; when a foreigner comes, a foreigner is reflected. The sound is obvious, the form is evident. But say, why is it like this? As a test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Ta Sui, "The conflagration at the end of the eon sweeps through and the universe is totally destroyed. I wonder, is this one destroyed or not?"<sup>1</sup>

Sui said, "It is destroyed."<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "If so, then this goes along with it."<sup>3</sup>

Sui said, "It goes along with it."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. What thing is "this one"? No one on earth can get ahold of this phrase. He scratches in advance, anticipating the itch.
2. An iron hammer head with no handle-hole is thrown down in front of him. He's lost his nostrils. Before he opens his mouth, he's already thoroughly exposed.
3. Immeasurably great men whirl around in the stream of words. After all he misunderstands.
4. The first arrow was still light but the second arrow was deep. Just this is what so many people cannot find. When the water rises, the boats ride high; with a lot of mud, the buddha image is big. If you say "It goes along with that," where is it? If you say that it doesn't go along with that, then what? I'll hit!

## COMMENTARY

Master Fa Chen of Ta Sui was a successor of Meditation Master Ta An. He was from Yen T'ing county in Tung Ch'uan (in Szechuan). He called on more than sixty men of knowledge.

Formerly he was the keeper of the fire in Kuei Shan's congregation. One day Kuei Shan asked him, "You have been here several years, yet you still don't know how to pose a question, so I can see what's what with you." Sui said, "What questions would you have me ask to be right?" Kuei Shan said, "Since you don't understand, ask, 'What is buddha?'" Sui covered Kuei Shan's mouth with his hand. Shan said, "Later you will not even find anyone to sweep the ground."

Later Ta Sui returned to Tung Ch'uan. At first he stayed by the road on P'eng K'ou Mountain, making tea and waiting on travellers for about three years in all. Only later did he finally appear in the world and open a mountain monastery, dwelling at Ta Sui.

There was a monk who asked him, "The conflagration at the end of the eon sweeps through and the universe is totally destroyed. I wonder, is this one destroyed or not?" This monk just came up with a question based on an idea in the Teachings. In the Teachings it says, "Formation, abiding, destruction, emptiness.<sup>a</sup> When the age of the triple cataclysm occurs, the destruction reaches to the third meditation heaven." Basically this monk did not know the meaning of this statement.

Tell me, what is "this one"? People often make emotional interpretations and say, "'This one' is the fundamental nature of sentient beings." Sui said, "It is destroyed." The monk said, "If so, then this goes along with it." Sui said, "It goes along with it." As for "this one," so many people make emotional interpretations and are unable to find it. If you say that it goes along with it, where is it? If you say it doesn't go along with it, then what? Haven't you heard it said: "If you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with questions"?

Later there was a monk who asked Master of the Mountain Hsiu, "The conflagration at the end of the eon sweeps through and the universe is totally destroyed. I wonder, is this one destroyed or not?" The Master of the Mountain said, "It's not destroyed." The monk said, "Why isn't it destroyed?" The Master said, "Because it's the same as the universe." Both "it's destroyed" and "it's not destroyed" obstruct people fatally.

Since the monk didn't understand what Ta Sui said, he inevitably had this matter on his mind. He took this question straight to Mt. T'ou Tzu in Shu Chou. T'ou Tzu asked him, "Where did you come here from?" The monk said, "From Ta Sui in western Szechuan." T'ou Tzu said, "What did Ta Sui have to say?" The monk then recounted the former conversation. T'ou Tzu burned incense and bowed and said, "In western Szechuan there's an ancient buddha who has appeared in the world. As for you, hurry back to him!" The monk returned to Ta Sui but Sui had already passed on. What an embarrassment for this monk!

Later there was a monk at the T'ang court named Ching Tsun who said of Ta Sui:

*Clearly there is no other truth—  
Who says (the Fifth Patriarch) approved the south-  
erner Neng?  
The one phrase "it goes along with it"  
Makes a patchrobed monk run over a thousand  
mountains.  
A cricket who's cold cries in the piled up leaves;  
By night a ghost bows to the lamp before a crypt.  
The humming stops outside the lonely window,  
He wanders back and forth, unable to overcome his  
regret.*

Hence Hsueh Tou draws on two of these lines afterwards to make his verse.

Right now, you shouldn't make the understanding that it is destroyed, and you shouldn't make the understanding that it is not destroyed. In the end, how will you understand? Quick, set your eyes on it and look!

#### VERSE

*In the light of the conflagration ending the age he poses his  
question—*

*\*\*What is he saying? He's already gone wrong.\**

*The patchrobed monk is still lingering within the double bar-  
rier.*

*\*\*If you squash this man how can he be saved? A  
hundred layers, a thousand levels.\**

*How touching—for a single phrase, “going along with that,”*

*\*\*The world’s patchrobed monks all make this sort of judgment. It’s not even worth it for a thousand phrases, for ten thousand phrases. What’s hard about cutting off his footsteps!\**

*Intently he travelled out and back alone for ten thousand miles.*

*\*\*His active consciousness is very chaotic. He stumbled by without knowing it. He’s just wearing out his straw sandals.\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou takes charge of the situation and comes out with his verse: in his words there’s a place where he shows himself.

“In the light of the conflagration ending the age he poses his question/The patchrobed monk is still lingering within the double barrier.” From the first this monk’s question was concerned with “it is destroyed” and “it is not destroyed”—this is the double barrier. A person who has attained has a place to show himself whether he is told “it is destroyed” or he is told “it is not destroyed.”

“How touching—for a single phrase, ‘going along with that,’/Intently he travelled out and back alone for ten thousand miles.” This versifies this monk taking the question to T’ou Tzu, then returning again to Ta Sui—this can indeed be called being intent for ten thousand miles.

#### TRANSLATOR’S NOTES

- a. According to traditional Buddhist cosmology, these are the four phases an eon goes through.

# Chao Chou's Big Turnips

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "Teacher, I have heard that you have personally seen Nan Ch'uan. Is this true or not?"<sup>1</sup>

Chou said, "Chen Chou produces big turnips."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. A thousand hearings are not as good as one seeing. He's pressing him. Everyone has a pair of eyebrows.
2. He holds up the sky and supports the earth. He cuts nails and shears through iron. The arrow flies past Korea.

## COMMENTARY

This monk too is one who has studied for a long time: inevitably, there's an eye in his question. Nevertheless, Chao Chou is an adept: he immediately says to him, "Chen Chou produces big turnips." This can be called flavorless talk that blocks off people's mouths. This old fellow Chao Chou greatly resembles a thief who steals in broad daylight. As soon as you open your mouth he immediately plucks your eyes out.

If you are an exceptional brave-spirited fellow, then amidst sparks struck from stone and the brilliance of a lightning flash, as soon as you hear it raised, you immediately get up and go. Otherwise, if you linger in thought and hold back your potential, you won't avoid losing your body and your life.

In judging this case the wild sage Ch'eng of Kiangsi called it "asking about the east, answering about the west." He said that Chao Chou didn't answer and didn't climb into his trap. If you understand this way, how will you get it?

Jurist Yuan said, "These are words (affording) a glimpse from the side." This is contained in the *Nine Belts*. If you under-

stand this way, you haven't even seen it in dreams, and, moreover, you're dragging Chao Chou down.

Some say, "Chen Chou has always produced big turnips, as everyone in the country knows. Chao Chou had called on Nan Ch'uan: everyone in the country knows this. That's why, when this monk nevertheless still asked whether or not Chao Chou had personally seen Nan Ch'uan, Chao Chou said to him, 'Chen Chou produces big turnips.'" But this has nothing to do with it.

If you don't understand in any of these ways, in the end, how will you understand? Chao Chou has his own road through the skies.

Haven't you heard: A monk asked Chiu Feng, "Teacher, I have heard that you personally saw Yen Shou. Is this true or not?" Feng said, "Is the wheat in front of the mountain ripe yet or not?" This matches exactly what Chao Chou said to the monk: both are like iron hammer heads with no handle holes.

Old man Chao Chou is an unconcerned man. If you question him carelessly he immediately snatches your eyes out. If you're a man who knows what is, you'll chew it carefully and swallow it. If you're a man who doesn't know what is, it will be like swallowing a date whole.

#### VERSE

*Chen Chou produces big turnips—*

*\*\*Everyone knows. Just avoid saying so. Each time it's brought up it's brand new.\**

*All the patchrobed monks in the country seize upon this as a principle;*

*\*\*Nevertheless, it isn't so. Who has a use for these idle words, this long-winded speech?\**

*They only know it as extending from past to present:*

*\*\*Half open, half closed. (They're as numerous) as hemp or millet. In ancient times it wasn't so; right now it isn't so either.\**

*How can they discern that the swan is white and the crow is black?*

*\*\*The whole capacity comes through. What's long is long*



*of itself; what's short is short of itself. Those who can recognize this are precious. Still, it's not worth discerning.\**

*Thief! Thief!*

*\*\*Bah! It's none other: Hsueh Tou himself is wearing stocks, giving evidence of his crime.\**

*He has snatched patchrobed monks' nostrils.*

*\*\*He's pierced them, snapped them around.\**

#### COMMENTARY

"Chen Chou produces big turnips." If you seize upon this as the ultimate principle, you've already gone wrong. When the ancients joined hands and ascended high mountains, they couldn't avoid the laughter of onlookers. People all know that this answer of Chao Chou's is a statement of the ultimate principle, though in the end they don't know where the ultimate principle is. That's why Hsueh Tou says, "All the patchrobed monks in the country seize upon this as a principle/They only know it as extending from past to present/How can they discern that the swan is white and the crow is black?"

Though they know that both ancient people and modern people have answered this way, when have they ever been able to distinguish expert from naive? Hsueh Tou says, "To really understand you must discern the swan's whiteness and the crow's blackness within the sparks Chao Chou strikes from stone, within the brilliance of Chao Chou's lightning flash."

At this point the verse on this case is completed, but Hsueh Tou brings out his own opinion and goes to the place leaping with life to tell you more: "Thief! Thief!/He has snatched patchrobed monks' nostrils." All the buddhas of past, present, and future are thieves too; the successive generations of patriarchs are thieves too. They were well able to snatch away people's eyes. As for the skill not to blunder, I only approve Chao Chou. But tell me, how does he make a good thief? "Chen Chou produces big turnips."

# Ma Ku Carrying his Ring-Staff

## POINTER

Move, and a shadow appears; become aware, and ice forms. Yet if you don't move and are not aware, you will not avoid entering into the wild fox cave.

If you can penetrate thoroughly, trust completely, without a hair of blinding obstruction, you'll be like a dragon finding water, like a tiger taking to the mountains. Let go, and even tiles and pebbles emit light; hold still, and even real gold loses its color.

The ancients' public cases could not avoid being round-about, but tell me, what were they discussing? To test, I cite this. Look!

## CASE

Ma Ku, carrying his ring-staff,<sup>a</sup> went to Chang Ching. He circled the meditation seat three times, then shook his staff once and stood there upright.<sup>1</sup> Chang Ching said, "Correct. Correct."<sup>2</sup> (Hsueh Tou added a word, saying "Wrong!")<sup>3</sup>

Ma Ku also went to Nan Ch'uan: he circled the meditation seat three times, shook his staff once and stood there upright.<sup>4</sup> Nan Ch'uan said, "Incorrect. Incorrect."<sup>5</sup> (Hsueh Tou added a word, saying, "Wrong!")<sup>6</sup>

Ma Ku then said, "Chang Ching said 'Correct'; why do you say 'Incorrect,' Master?"<sup>7</sup>

Nan Ch'uan said, "Chang Ching is correct; it's you who are incorrect.<sup>8</sup> This is what is turned about by the power of the wind; in the end it breaks down and disintegrates."<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. He bursts forth in the same fashion as (Yung Chia did at) Ts'ao Ch'i; he startles the heavens and stirs the earth.

2. He's washing a clod of earth in the mud. He completely fools everyone. What talk is this? A donkey-tethering stake.
3. It won't do to let him go. There's still a move to go.
4. As before, he's washing a clod of earth in the mud: again he bursts forth; but though the frog leaps, he can't get out of the basket.
5. Why not accept it? He kills the man without blinking an eye. What is this talk?
6. It won't do to let the error go.
7. Where is the master? This fellow from the beginning grasps people's words; he has broken down considerably.
8. Good! When one kills someone, one must see blood; when one helps someone, he should do his utmost for them. How many people has he deceived?
9. After all, Ma Ku is trapped by Nan Ch'uan.

#### COMMENTARY

When the ancients travelled on foot to visit the monasteries everywhere, they only had this matter on their minds: they wanted to discern whether the old teacher on the carved wood seat possessed eyes or did not possess eyes. The people of old would stay if there was mutual agreement in a single word, and would leave if they did not agree in one word.

Observe how that Ma Ku went to Chang Ching, circled the meditation seat thrice, shook his staff once, and stood there upright. Chang Ching said, "Correct. Correct." (To use) the sword that kills people, the sword that brings people to life, one must be a master in his own right.

Hsueh Tou says "Wrong!" This falls on both sides, but if you go to either side to understand, you will not see Hsueh Tou's meaning. Ma Ku stood there upright, but tell me, what did he do it for? Why does Hsueh Tou then say "Wrong"? Where is it that he is wrong? Chang Ching said "Correct. Correct." Where is it that he is wrong? Hsueh Tou seems to be sitting there reading the judgment.

Ma Ku, carrying this word "correct," then went to see Nan Ch'uan. As before, he circled the meditation seat thrice, shook his staff once, and stood there upright. Ch'uan said, "Incorrect. Incorrect." For the sword that kills people, the sword that gives people life, one must be a master of the school in his own right. Hsueh Tou says "Wrong!" Chang Ching said, "Correct. Cor-

rect." Nan Ch'uan said "Incorrect. Incorrect." Are these the same or different? The first says "Correct": why is he also wrong? The latter says "Incorrect": why is he too wrong? If you attain understanding at Chang Ching's saying, you will not even be able to save yourself: if you attain understanding at Nan Ch'uan's saying, you can be the teacher of Buddhas and Patriarchs. Even so, patchrobed monks must prove it themselves before they will understand; do not just accept other people's verbal explanations.

Since Ma Ku's question was the same, why did one say "correct" and one say "incorrect"? If one is a thoroughly competent master, a man who has attained great liberation, he must have a life apart (from "correct" and "incorrect"). One who has not forgotten mind and objects will certainly be stuck over these two sides. If you want to clearly understand past and present, and cut off the tongues of everyone in the world, first you must clearly apprehend these two "wrongs." This is so because Hsueh Tou wants to bring up the livingness. If you are a fellow with blood under your skin, you will naturally not go to the words and phrases to create interpretations; you will not go to a donkey-tethering stake to make up theories. Some people say that Hsueh Tou utters these two "wrongs" on behalf of Ma Ku, but what has that got to do with it? They are far from knowing that the ancient's added comments lock off the essential gate; this side is correct, and that side is also correct, but ultimately they do not remain on either of the two sides. The librarian Ch'ing said, "Holding his staff, circling the meditation seat, 'correct' and 'incorrect' are both wrong. The reality of it does not lie herein."

Have you not read how Yung Chia came to Ts'ao Ch'i and saw the Sixth Patriarch? He circled the meditation seat three times, shook his staff once, and stood erect. The Patriarch said, "A monk is to have three thousand modes of dignity, and eighty-four thousand refinements of conduct; where have you come from, O Worthy, that you bear such great self-conceit?" Why did the Sixth Patriarch say that he bore great self-conceit? This one did not say "correct" or "incorrect"; "correct" and "incorrect" are both donkey-tethering stakes. There is only Hsueh Tou who, pronouncing two "wrongs," has thus attained something.

Ma Ku said, "Chang Ching said 'correct'; why do you say

'incorrect,' Master?" This old fellow didn't spare his eyebrows; he indulged considerably—Nan Ch'uan said, "Chang Ching is correct; it's you who are incorrect." One might say that Nan Ch'uan, seeing a rabbit, released a falcon. Librarian Ch'ing said, "Nan Ch'uan was excessively doting; whereas he might have let the matter rest with 'incorrect,' still he went on to bring out the other's fault for him, saying, 'This is what is turned around by the power of the wind; eventually it breaks down and disintegrates.'" The *Sutra of Complete Enlightenment* says, "This here body of mine is a combination of four major elements. The so-called defiled form of hair, nails, teeth, skin, flesh, sinews, bone, marrow, and brains, all return to earth. Saliva, tears, pus, and blood, all return to water. Warm breath returns to fire, and movement returns to wind. When the four major elements each separate, where could this illusory body be?" When that Ma Ku circled the meditation seat holding his staff, already this was what is turned around by the power of the wind; eventually it breaks down and disintegrates. Then tell me, ultimately where does the matter of discovering the source of mind lie? When you get here, you must be a man made of cast iron in order to realize it.

Have you not read how the scholar Chang Ch'o called on the Ch'an Master Tsang of Hsi T'ang? He asked, "Do the mountains, rivers, and earth exist or not? Do the Buddhas of the three times exist or not?" Tsang said, "They exist." Chang Ch'o the scholar said, "Wrong!" Tsang said, "Who have you seen?" Ch'o said, "I have seen the Master of Ching Shan: whatever I asked about, Ching Shan said it doesn't exist." Tsang said, "What family do you have?" Ch'o said, "I have a wife and two children." Tsang then asked, "What family does Ching Shan have?" Ch'o said, "Ching Shan is an Ancient Buddha; you should not slander him, Master." Tsang said, "Wait till you are like Ching Shan; then I'll tell you everything doesn't exist." Chang Ch'o just bowed his head. A competent teacher of the sect always wants to melt the sticking points, remove the bonds, pull out the nails and draw out the pegs for people; he should not just hold to one side, but sweep to the left and turn to the right, sweep to the right and turn to the left.

Just observe how Yang Shan went to Chung Yi's place to thank him for ordination. When Yi saw him coming, he beat his hand on the meditation seat and said, "Wa wa." Yang Shan

thereupon stood to the east; then he stood to the west, and then stood in the middle. After that, once he had finished giving thanks for ordination, he then retreated and stood there. Chung Yi said, "Where did you get this concentration?" Yang Shan said, "I took it off the Seal of Ts'ao Ch'i." Chung Yi said, "You tell me, whom did Ts'ao Ch'i use this concentration to receive?" Yang Shan said, "To receive the Overnight Enlightened Guest (Yung Chia)." Yang Shan too asked Chung Yi, "Master, where did you get this concentration?" Chung Yi said, "I got this concentration at Ma Tsu's place." Isn't such conversation by fellows who raise one and understand three, see the root and pursue the branches?

Lung Ya said to his community, "Those people who penetrate the study must pass beyond buddhas and patriarchs. (Tung Shan) the Master of Hsin Feng said, 'If you see the verbal teachings of the buddhas and patriarchs as if they were your mortal enemies, only then will you have the qualifications for penetrating the study.' If you can't pass beyond them, then you will be deceived by the patriarchs and buddhas." At the time there was a monk who asked, "Do the patriarchs and buddhas have any intention to deceive people or not?" Lung Ya said, "Tell me, do rivers and lakes have any intention to obstruct people or not?" He went on to say, "Although rivers and lakes have no intention to obstruct people, it's just that people now can't cross them. Therefore, rivers and lakes after all become barriers to people. You cannot say that rivers and lakes do not obstruct people. Although the patriarchs and buddhas have no intention to deceive people, it's just that people now cannot pass beyond them. So patriarchs and buddhas after all deceive people. Again, you cannot say that patriarchs and buddhas do not deceive people. If one can pass beyond the patriarchs and buddhas, this person surpasses the patriarchs and buddhas. Still, one must completely realize the intent of the patriarchs and buddhas: only then can one be equal to those transcendent people of old. If you have not yet been able to pass through, if you study the Buddhas and study the Patriarchs, then you'll have no hope of attaining even in ten thousand aeons." The monk also asked, "How can I be able to avoid being deceived by the Patriarchs and Buddhas?" Lung Ya said, "You must be enlightened yourself." When you get here, you must be like this.

Why? When you help someone, you should do your utmost for them; when you kill someone, you must see their blood. Hsueh Tou is such a man, so he dares to pick up and play.

VERSE

This "wrong" and that "wrong"—

*\*\*Be careful of your eyebrows! Still, this is acting according to the imperative. 'In heaven and on earth, I alone am the sole honored one.'\**

It is important not to take them away.

*\*\*A pair of hammerheads without holes; even the great Compassionate One with a thousand hands cannot lift them up. If you take them away, Reverend, you'll receive thirty blows.\**

Then the waves are calm in the four seas,

*\*\*No one in the world dares to move. East, West, South, North, all have the same family style. Recently there has been much rain and water.\**

The hundred rivers return to the ocean tide.

*\*\*Clean and naked, peace and tranquility in one's own house is realized; the sea being at rest, the rivers are clear.\**

The standard of the ancient rod is lofty, with twelve gates;

*\*\*How does it compare with this one? There is no eye on the staff. It is important to avoid going to the staff to make a living.\**

In each gate there is a road, empty and desolate.

*\*\*There's not a single thing. It belies your everyday life. If you look, you'll go blind.\**

Not desolate—

*\*\*After all. Luckily there's a place to turn around in. Already blind—so I strike!\**

The adept should seek medicine without disease.

*\*\*Once having died, you won't come back to life again. Why are you fast asleep all day long? Why search through the heavens and grope over the earth!\**

## COMMENTARY

This verse resembles the case of Te Shan seeing Kuei Shan: first (Hsueh Tou) adds two turning words, piercing it through on one string; then he produces his verse. "This 'wrong' and that 'wrong'—it is important not to take them away." Hsueh Tou's meaning is that the "wrong" here and the "wrong" there should absolutely not be taken away; if you take them away, you're mistaken. It is necessary to add this double "wrong" like this, and thus you realize right away: "The waves are calm in the four seas, the hundred rivers return to the ocean tide." How pure the wind, how bright the moon! If you gain understanding at these two "wrongs," you will no longer have the slightest concern: mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, what is long is of itself long, and what is short is of itself short; one breeze every five days, one rainfall every ten days. That is why he said, "The waves are calm in the four seas; the hundred rivers return to the ocean tide."

The latter part eulogizes Ma Ku carrying his staff; "The standard of the ancient rod is lofty, with twelve gates." The people of old used a whip for a rod; patchrobed monks use the staff as a rod. The "ancient rod" is the staff; the pure wind is higher than the twelve vermilion gates. If you can understand this two-fold "wrong," then your staff will emit light; even the ancient rod can't be put to use. An Ancient said, "If you know the staff, your life's study is finished." It is also said, "This is not displaying form and vainly holding to things; the Tathagata's precious staff has personally left its traces." This is in the same category. When you get here, through all upsets and downfalls, throughout all times, you attain great freedom.

"In each gate there is a road, empty and desolate." Although there is a road, it is just that it's empty and desolate. At this point Hsueh Tou feels that he has indulged, so he goes on to strike a smashing blow for you; although it is so, still there is a place which is not desolate. Even if you are an adept, when you have no illness, still you must seek a bit of medicine to take.

## TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Monks' travelling staffs were often adorned with six or twelve rings at the top; these symbolize the causal chain: ignorance—



volition—consciousness—name and form—the six senses—contact—sensation—love—grasping—existence—birth—old age and death. The jingling of the rings is supposed to constantly remind the travelling monk of his condition. The “twelve gates” mentioned in the verse also may be taken to refer to these.

- b. Fugai regards this passage from the *Sutra of Complete Enlightenment* as a later addition; in the Chinese style, it was customary to insert “footnotes” right into a text.

# Elder Ting Stands Motionless

## POINTER

The ten directions cut off, a thousand eyes abruptly open; when one phrase cuts off all streams, myriad impulses cease. Are there after all any who will die together and be born together? The public case is completely manifest, but if you cannot get it together, please look at the Ancients' trailing vines:

## CASE

Elder Ting asked Lin Chi, "What is the great meaning of the Buddhist Teaching?"<sup>1</sup>

Chi came down off his meditation seat, grabbed and held (Ting), gave him a slap, and then pushed him away.<sup>2</sup> Ting stood there motionless.<sup>3</sup> A monk standing by said, "Elder Ting, why do you not bow?"<sup>4</sup> Just as Ting bowed,<sup>5</sup> he suddenly was greatly enlightened.<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. So many people are at a loss when they get here. There is still this here. Oh, why is he so feeble-minded?
2. Today he caught him. He's kind as an old woman. No patchrobed monk in the world can leap clear.
3. He's already fallen into the ghost's cave. He's already stumbled past. He can't avoid losing his nostrils.
4. On neutral ground there is a man who can see through it all. He has completely attained the other's power. When someone dies in the eastern house, the people of the western house help them mourn.
5. He uses diligence to make up for his incompetence.

6. Like finding a lamp in the darkness; like a poor man finding a jewel. (Still, this is) adding error upon error. But tell me, what did Elder Ting see, that he bowed?

#### COMMENTARY

See how he was; directly leaving, directly entering, directly going, directly coming—this indeed is the True School of Lin Chi, to have such dynamic function. If you can go all the way through, then you can overturn the sky and make it into earth, attaining the use of the endowment yourself.

Elder Ting was such a fellow; slapped once by Lin Chi, as he bowed and rose he immediately understood the ultimate. He was a man of the North, extremely simple and direct. Once he had attained this, he did not appear in the world thereafter. He thenceforth made complete use of the ability of Lin Chi; unavoidably his sharpness came through. One day on the road he met Yen T'ou, Hsueh Feng, and Ch'in Shan. Yen T'ou asked, "Where do you come from?" Ting said, "Lin Chi." T'ou said, "Is the teacher in good health?" Ting said, "He has already passed on." T'ou said, "We three were going especially to pay him our respects; our good fortune is shallow and thin, that we find he has 'returned to silence.' When the teacher was living, what did he have to say? Elder, please cite one or two examples for us." Ting then cited one day when Lin Chi instructed the assembly by saying, "In the lump of red flesh there is a true man with no station: he is always going in and out through the gates of your senses; those who have not witnessed proof of this, look! Look!" At the time there was a monk who came forth and asked, "What is the true man with no station?" Lin Chi immediately grabbed him and said, "Speak! Speak!" The monk hesitated, whereupon Lin Chi pushed him away and said, "The true man of no station: what a piece of crap he is!" Then Lin Chi returned to the abbot's room.

(Hearing this,) Yen T'ou unconsciously stuck out his tongue (in awe). Ch'in Shan said, "Why did he not say, 'Not a true man of no station'?" Ting grabbed him and said, "How far apart are 'a true man of no station' and 'not a true man of no station'? Speak quickly! Speak quickly!" Ch'in Shan did not speak; his face turned yellow and green. Yen T'ou and Hsueh Feng ap-

proached and bowed and said, "This novice does not know good from bad; he has offended you, Elder: we hope you will be merciful and forgive his error." Ting said, "If not for you two old fellows, I would have choked this bed-wetting sprite to death."

Again, once in Chen Chou, as he was returning from a vegetarian feast, he rested on a bridge. There he met three lecturing monks. One of them asked, "What is the meaning of 'Where the river of Ch'an is deep, you must plumb the very bottom'?" Ting grabbed him and was about to throw him off the bridge, when the other two lecturers frantically tried to rescue him, saying, "Stop! Stop! He has offended you, Elder, but we hope you will be merciful." Ting said, "If not for you two, I would have let him plumb the very bottom."

Observe such methods of his. This is wholly the dynamic function of Lin Chi. Also take a look at Hsueh Tou's verse:

#### VERSE

*Tuan Chi's entire ability continues in his footsteps;*

*\*\*The Yellow River is muddy from the very source. The son inherits the father's work.\**

*Brought forth, why should it remain at ease?*

*\*\*Where is it? What can be done about the fact that there is such a man? Can a man without feet or hands attain that, or not?\**

*The great spirit lifted his hand without much ado*

*\*\*He scares people to death. A little boasting. Striking once with a whisk, I will not test any further.\**

*And split apart Flower Mountain's ten million layers.*

*\*\*The whole world appears at once. It's fallen.\**

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou eulogizes, "Tuan Chi's entire ability continues in his footsteps; brought forth, why should it remain at ease?" Only Lin Chi alone continued in the footsteps of Huang Po's<sup>a</sup> great ability and great function. Once it is brought forth, it does

not admit of any attempt to discuss it; if you hesitate, you'll immediately fall into the realm of ignorance.<sup>b</sup>

The *Surangama Sutra* says, "Just as when I put my finger on it, the Ocean Seal emits light, if you arouse your minds even momentarily, anxiety over the material world will come up first."

"The great spirit lifted his hand without much ado, and split apart Flower Mountain's ten million layers." The great spirit (of the Yellow River) had great supernatural powers; with his hand he broke open Mt. T'ai Hua and let the water of the Yellow River run through. Elder Ting's feeling of doubt was like a massive mountainous heap; struck once by Lin Chi, immediately he found the tiles had scattered, the ice had melted.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Tuan Chi was a posthumous title of Huang Po Hsi Yun, Lin Chi's teacher.
- b. "Realm of ignorance" is used here to translate "the heaps and the elements"; that is, form, feeling, perception, volition, and consciousness (the five heaps), and the six sense organs, their objects, and their associated consciousnesses (the eighteen elements). These are considered identical to fundamental ignorance.

# Ministry President Ch'en Sees Tzu Fu

## POINTER

He does not discriminate east from west, nor distinguish south from north, from morning till evening, evening till morning; but can you say he is fast asleep? Sometimes his eyes are like comets, but can you say he is wide awake? Sometimes he calls south north; but tell me, is he mindful or mindless? Is he a man of the Way or an ordinary man? If you can pass through here, for the first time you will know the ultimate, and then you will know how the ancients were so or not so. But tell me, what time is this? To test, I cite this. Look!

## CASE

Ch'en Ts'ao, ministry president, went to see Tzu Fu. When Fu saw him coming, he immediately drew a circle.<sup>1</sup> Ts'ao said, "My coming here like this has already missed the point; how much more so, to go on and draw a circle!"<sup>2</sup> Fu thereupon closed the door of his room.<sup>3</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "Ch'en Ts'ao has just one eye."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. This is a spirit recognizing a spirit, a thief recognizing a thief. If he were not relaxed and at ease, how could he discern this fellow? But do you see the adamant cage?<sup>a</sup>
2. Today he has encountered a man who's fast asleep. This old thief!
3. A thief does not break into a poor man's house. He has already entered the other's cage.
4. Hsueh Tou has an eye on his forehead. But tell me, where does his meaning lie? He should give him another circle. Clearly. Ch'en

Ts'ao has a dragon's head, but a snake's tail; at that time he should have given Tzu Fu such a thrust that he would have had no gate to advance through, and no road to retreat upon. But tell me, what further pressure could he bring to bear on him?

#### COMMENTARY

Ministry president Ch'en Ts'ao was a contemporary of P'ei Hsiu and Li Ao.<sup>b</sup> Whenever he saw a monk come, he would first invite him to a meal, and would give him three hundred cash, wishing thereby to test the monk. One day Yun Men came; seeing him, Ch'en Ts'ao immediately asked, "I do not ask about what is in the Confucian books, and the twelve part teachings of the three vehicles have their own professors: what is the purpose of a patchrobed monk's journey on foot?" Yun Men said, "How many people have you asked?" Ts'ao said, "I am asking you right now." Yun Men said, "Leaving aside 'right now' for the moment, what is the meaning of the teachings?" Ts'ao said, "Yellow scrolls on red rollers." Yun Men said, "These are written words and letters: what is the meaning of the teachings?" Ts'ao said, "When the mouth wishes to speak of it, words flee; when the mind seeks affinity with it, thought vanishes." Yun Men said, "'When the mouth wishes to speak of it, words flee' is to refer to maintaining verbalization; 'when the mind seeks affinity with it, thought vanishes' is to refer to false conceptualization. What is the meaning of the teachings?" Ts'ao was speechless. Yun Men said, "I have heard it said that you read the *Lotus of Truth* scripture; is this true or not?" Ts'ao said, "True." Yun Men said, "In that scripture it says that all livelihood and productive labor are not contrary to the characteristics of reality. But tell me, in the heaven that is beyond thought and thoughtlessness,<sup>c</sup> right now how many people fall back from that position?"<sup>d</sup> Ts'ao again was speechless. Yun Men said, "Do not be so careless. A real monk abandons the three scriptures and five discourses<sup>e</sup> to enter a monastery; after ten or twenty years, he still can do nothing himself. So how could you, ministry president, be able to understand?" Ts'ao bowed and said, "I am at fault."

Also one day as (Ch'en Ts'ao) had climbed up in a tower with a group of officials, they looked out and saw several

monks coming. One of the officials said, "Those people approaching are all Ch'an monks." Ts'ao said, "No, they're not." The official said, "How do you know they're not?" Ts'ao said, "Wait till they come near, and I will put them to a test for you." When the monks reached the foot of the tower, Ts'ao suddenly called out, "O Elders!" The monks raised their heads. Ts'ao said to the group of officials, "Didn't you believe what I said?" There was only one man, Yun Men, whom Ch'en Ts'ao could not expose.

Ch'en Ts'ao had seen Mu Chou. One day he went to call upon Tzu Fu. When Fu saw him coming, he immediately drew a circle. Tzu Fu was an honorable adept in the Kuei-Yang lineage; he always liked to use the meeting of perspectives<sup>f</sup> to deal with people. When he saw the ministry president Ch'en Ts'ao coming, he thereupon drew a circular figure. But what could he do? Ts'ao was after all an adept, and didn't submit to the deceit of others; he knew himself how to make a test—he said, "My coming here like this has already missed the point; how is it worth going on to draw a circle?" Fu closed the door. This kind of public case is called "discerning the target within the words, concealing ability within a phrase." Hsueh Tou says, "Ch'en Ts'ao has just one eye." Hsueh Tou may be said to have an eye on his forehead. But tell me, where does his meaning lie? (Tzu Fu) should have produced another circular figure; but if he always acted like this, how could a patchrobed monk benefit others? Now I ask you, if you were Ch'en Ts'ao at that moment, what could you have said in order to avoid Hsueh Tou's saying that he has just one eye? Thus Hsueh Tou kicks over everything and versifies:

#### VERSE

*Round and round the jewel turns, ringing like jade—*

*\*\*With a three foot pole he tries to stir the Yellow River.  
Only the Blue-eyed Barbarian (Bodhidharma) could do  
it. Made of cast iron.\**

*Horses carry it, asses bear it; load it on an iron ship;*

*\*\*Why do you need so many for? What limit is there?  
I give it to you.\**



*Share it with an unconcerned traveller of sea and mountain.*

*\*\*There is someone who has no need of it. If one is a real unconcerned traveller, he has no use for it. But you must be a traveller without concern before you will get it. \**

*When fishing for a tortoise, he lets down a cage-trap.*

*\*\*Coming this way, going this way; none can escape.*

*If it is a frog, what is the use of it? What's to be done about prawns, mussels, snails, and oysters?*

*It is necessary to hook a tortoise. \**

*Hsueh Tou also said, "No patchrobed monk in the world can jump out."*

*\*\*You too are inside it. All are buried in the same hole; but can you manage to jump out, your reverence? \**

#### COMMENTARY

"Round and round the jewel turns, tinkling like jade: horses carry it, asses bear it; load it on an iron ship." The beginning of Hsueh Tou's poem just eulogizes the circle. If you can merge with it, you'll be like a tiger with horns. This bit requires you to have the bottom fall out of your bucket, your mental machinations to come to an end; throw away gain and loss, right and wrong all at once, do not make your understanding in terms of principle anymore, and do not understand it as a mysterious wonder. Ultimately, how to understand? This must be carried by horses, borne by asses, loaded on an iron ship. You will only get it if you see it here. Anyplace else, it cannot be imparted: it must be taken and shared with an unconcerned traveller of sea and mountain. If you have the slightest bit of concern in your belly, you will not be able to take it up properly. Here you must be a person who is not affected by concerns or absence of concerns, by unpleasant feelings or pleasing situations, or by Buddhas or Patriarchs: only then can you take it up properly. If there is any Ch'an to seek, any measure of profane or holy feelings, you will certainly not be able to fully attain mastery. But once you have attained mastery, how will you understand his saying, "When fishing for a tortoise, he lowers a cage-trap"? In fishing for tortoises, only a cage will do. That is why Feng Hsueh said, "Used to fishing for whales, I scour the great

ocean; instead I'm disappointed by a frog crawling in the muddy sand." He also said, "O great tortoise, do not carry away the three mountains! I want to walk on the summit of P'eng Lai." Hsueh Tou also said, "No patchrobed monk in the world can leap out." If one is a great tortoise, he will not entertain the view of a patchrobed monk; if one is a patchrobed monk, he will not entertain the view of a great tortoise.

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. The word for cage also means circle.
- b. Like Ch'en Ts'ao, P'ei Hsiu and Li Ao were laymen who were adept at Ch'an. P'ei Hsiu was a student of Huang Po; Li Ao was a student of Yao Shan.
- c. Or: "neither perception nor non-perception," *naivasamjnana-samjnanayatana*, the highest of the "four trances" which were cultivated by Buddhist mendicants since ancient times.
- d. According to the Lotus Scripture, five thousand monks and nuns who thought they had attained nirvana got up and left when the Buddha began to preach the Lotus. They represent the lesser vehicle, whose devotees abide in detachment, without being able to detach from detachment itself.
- e. According to the *Hekigan-Sho*, the three scriptures are the Hua Yen ("Flower Garland"), the Fa Hua ("Flower of Dharma," the Lotus), and the Nieh Pan (Nirvana) Scriptures; its list of the five discourses is redundant and thus incomplete, but it included the Wei Shih ("Consciousness Only"), Chi Hsin ("Arousal of Faith"), and the Ta Chih Tu Lun ("On the Great Perfection of Wisdom") Discourses.
- f. Or: "meeting at objects," "concentration on objects." This refers specifically to circular figures, with or without characters added. Yan Shan especially is known for his use of these figures. The perspective of teacher and student meet in the object, and there's a special series of circular figures to represent this. Also, various phases and processes of Buddhist Teaching were represented symbolically in circles, figures, and words; no doubt at times these were used as meditation objects.

## Yang Shan Asks "Where Have You Come From?"

### CASE

Yang Shan asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?"<sup>1</sup>

The monk said, "Mount Lu."<sup>2</sup>

Yang Shan said, "Did you visit Five Elders Peak?"<sup>3</sup>

The monk said, "I didn't get there."<sup>4</sup>

Yang Shan said, "You never visited the mountain at all."<sup>5</sup>

(Later,) Yun Men said, "These words were all for the sake of compassion; thus they had a conversation in the weeds."<sup>6</sup>

### NOTES

1. Everyone in the world is the same. Still it is necessary to ask. (The monk) will inevitably construe it in the ordinary way.
2. A truthful man is hard to find.
3. He uses the wind to fan the fire. How could he have ever passed it by?
4. Take a step. A red face is not as good as honest speech. He seems to be at a loss.
5. Too much ado! He should be careful of his eyebrows. What is this old fellow's hurry?
6. The sword that kills people, the sword that gives people life. Two, three. If you want to know the mountain road, you must be the man who travels on it.

### COMMENTARY

The point of testing someone is to know him intimately as soon as he opens his mouth. An Ancient said, "Immeasurably great people are turned about in the stream of speech." If you are one who has the eye on your forehead, as soon as it is being

brought up, you immediately know where it comes down. See their one question, one answer; each is distinctly clear. Why did Yun Men then say that these words were all for the sake of compassion, so they had a conversation in the weeds? When that man of old gets here, he is like a clear mirror on its stand, like a bright jewel in the palm of the hand: when a foreigner comes, a foreigner is reflected, and when a native comes, a native is reflected. Not even a single fly could get past his scrutiny. But tell me, how is it that there was a conversation in the weeds for the sake of compassion? It was nevertheless dangerously steep; getting to this realm, only this fellow could hold up. This monk had personally come from Mount Lu; why did (Yang Shan) then say, "You have never visited the mountain"?

Kuei Shan one day asked Yang Shan, "When there are monks coming from various places, what do you use to test them?" Yang Shan said, "I have a way of testing." Kuei Shan said, "Try to show me." Yang Shan said, "Whenever I see a monk coming, I just lift up my whisk and say to him, 'Do they have this in other places?' When he has something to say, I just say to him, 'Leaving this aside for the moment, what about That?'" Kuei Shan said, "This has been the tooth and nail of our sect since time immemorial."

Haven't you read how Ma Tsu asked Pai Chang, "Where do you come from?" Chang said, "From down the mountain." Tsu said, "Did you meet anyone on the road?" Chang said, "Not at all." Tsu said, "Why did you not meet anyone at all?" Chang said, "If I had met anyone, I would mention it to you, teacher." Tsu said, "How could this have been happening?" Chang said, "I am at fault." Tsu said, "On the contrary, I am at fault."

Yang Shan's questioning the monk was just like these examples. At that time, when he said, "Did you ever get to Five Elders Peak?" if that monk had been a man, he would simply have said, "A disaster." Instead, he said, "I never got there." Since this monk was not an adept, why did Yang Shan not act according to the rule, so as to avoid the many complications that subsequently appeared? Instead he said, "You never visited the mountain." That is why Yun Men said, "These words were all for the sake of compassion, thus they had a conversation in the weeds." If it were a talk outside the weeds, then it would not be like this.

VERSE

*Leaving the weeds, entering the weeds;*

*\*\*Above the head, vast expanse; below the feet,  
vast expanse. Half open, half closed. He is  
so, and I too am so.\**

*Who knows how to seek them out!*

*\*\*He has a single eye on his forehead. You do not  
know how to seek them out!\**

*White clouds, layer upon layer;*

*\*\*A thousand levels, a hundred layers. He puts  
another head on top of his head.\**

*Red sun, clear and bright.*

*\*\*It has broken through. Blind! If you lift up  
your eyes, you'll miss it.\**

*Looking to the left, there are no flaws;*

*\*\*Blind fellow! As before, there's nothing to  
be concerned about. Why are you displaying so  
much cleverness!\**

*Looking to the right, already old.*

*\*\*One thought, ten thousand years. Gone past.\**

*Have you not seen the man of Cold Mountain?*

*\*\*A leper drags his companion along.\**

*He travelled so swiftly;*

*\*\*Still he's not fast.\**

*Ten years he couldn't return,*

*\*\*Where is he right now? It's obvious.\**

*And forgot the road by which he came.*

*\*\*He has attained freedom. (Hsueh Tou) passes up  
the initiative, so (I'll) strike. Better not to  
act so lost.\**

COMMENTARY

"Leaving the weeds, entering the weeds; who knows how to seek them out?" Hsueh Tou after all knows where they are at; when he gets there, with one hand he upholds, and with the

other hand he pushes down. "White clouds, layer upon layer; red sun, clear and bright." This is much like "Grasses in profusion, mist overhanging." At this point there is not even so much as a single hair that belongs to the ordinary, nor so much as a single hair that belongs to the holy. The whole world has never concealed it; each particular cannot cover it. This is what is called the realm of no-mind; when cold, it doesn't feel cold, and when hot it doesn't feel hot—the whole thing is one great gate of liberation. "Looking to the left, there are no flaws; looking to the right, already old."

Master "Lazy" Ts'an dwelt in seclusion in a stone grotto on Mount Heng. Emperor Su Tsung of T'ang heard of his name and sent an emissary to summon him. The emissary went to his grotto and made the announcement, "The Emperor has a command; you should rise and give thanks for his favor, Reverend." Just then Ts'an poked into his ox-dung fire, took out a baked yam and ate it; cold nose-water dripped from his chin. He did not answer at all. The emissary laughed and said, "I suggest that you wipe off that snot, Reverend." Ts'an said, "What leisure time do I have to wipe snot for a worldly man?" After all he never arose. The emissary returned and reported this to the Emperor. Su Tsung praised him highly. Someone so pure and calm, so clear and direct as this, is not at the disposal of others; he just holds still, as though made of cast iron. It is just like the case of Master Shan Tao, who after the purge never again became a monk; people called him "the stone-grotto worker." Whenever he tread the pestle, he forgot the movement of his footsteps. A monk asked Lin Chi, "What is the essential meaning of the stone grotto worker's forgetfulness of the movement of his footsteps?" Chi said, "Sunken in a deep pit."

Fa Yen's verse on Completely Perfect True Nature reads,

*When reason is exhausted, feelings and con-  
siderations are forgotten:*

*How could there be any adequate comparison?*

*Wherever I go there's the frosty night's moon;*

*It falls as it may into the valley ahead.*

*When the fruits are ripe, they are heavy with mon-  
keys;*

*The mountains go on so long, it seems I have lost  
my way;*

*When I raise my head, there is some light remain-  
ing—*

*Actually this is west of my dwelling place.*

Hsueh Tou said, "Have you not seen the man of Cold Mountain? He travelled so swiftly: for ten years he couldn't return, and forgot the road by which he came." In one of the Cold Mountain Man's poems it says, "If you want a place to rest your body, you can preserve it long on Cold Mountain. The gentle wind blows in the dense pines; heard from nearby, the sound is even better. Underneath there is a man with half-grey hair furiously reading Huang-Lao.<sup>a</sup> For ten years he couldn't return, and forgot the road he took when he came." Yung Chia also said, "Mind is the organ, phenomena are the objects: both are like flaws in a mirror. When the defilement of the flaws is gone, only then does the light appear; when mind and phenomena are both forgotten, nature is identical to reality." When you get here, be like a fool, like a blockhead, and then you will perceive this public case. If you do not reach this realm, you will just be running around in the words; what end will there ever be?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. That is, the Taoist teachings: a book on internal medicine by the Yellow Emperor (Huang Ti) and the Tao Te Ching of Laotzu, explaining the way to long life.

asked, "Do they also have this in the South?" Cho said, "No." Manjusri said, "What do they usually use to drink tea?" Cho was speechless. After all he took his leave and departed. Manjusri ordered Ch'un T'i the servant boy to see him to the gate. When they got to the portals of the gate, Wu Cho asked the boy, "Before, he said, 'In front three by three; in back, three by three'; how many is this?" The boy said, "O Worthy!" Cho responded "Yes?" The boy said, "How many is this?" Cho also asked, "What temple is this?" The boy pointed beyond the Vajrasattva; when Cho turned his head, the illusory temple and the boy had vanished completely out of sight: it was just an empty valley. Later that place was called the Vajra (Adamantine) Cave.

Later on a monk asked Feng Hsueh, "What is the Master of Ch'ing Liang Mountain?"<sup>a</sup> Hsueh said, "One phrase did not settle Wu Cho's question; to this very day he is still a monk who sleeps in the fields."

If you want to penetrate the peaceful equanimity of actual truth, so that your feet tread upon the real earth, go to Wu Cho's words to get attainment; then naturally though you stay in a cauldron of hot water or the embers of a stove, still you would not feel hot, and though you stay on cold ice, neither would you feel cold.

If you want to go through to use the solitary peril, the steep and sharp, like the Jewel Sword of the Diamond King, go to Manjusri's words to get attainment; then naturally water poured will not wet, and wind blowing cannot enter.

Have you not seen how Ti Tsang of Cheng Chou asked a monk, "Where have you just come from?" The monk said, "The South." Tsang said, "How is Buddhism there?" The monk said, "There is much deliberation." Tsang said, "How can that compare with us here sowing fields and having a lot of rice to eat?" Now tell me, is this the same as Manjusri's answer, or is it different? Some say that Wu Cho's answers were wrong, while in Manjusri's answers there is both snake and dragon, there is both the ordinary and the sage. What bearing does this have on it? Can you clearly discern three by three in front, three by three in back? The first arrow will still light; the second arrow went deep. Now tell me, how many is this? If you can pass through here, then a thousand phrases, ten thousand phrases, are only one phrase. If at this one phrase you can cut



*When I raise my head, there is some light remain-  
ing—*

*Actually this is west of my dwelling place.*

Hsueh Tou said, "Have you not seen the man of Cold Mountain? He travelled so swiftly: for ten years he couldn't return, and forgot the road by which he came." In one of the Cold Mountain Man's poems it says, "If you want a place to rest your body, you can preserve it long on Cold Mountain. The gentle wind blows in the dense pines; heard from nearby, the sound is even better. Underneath there is a man with half-grey hair furiously reading Huang-Lao.<sup>a</sup> For ten years he couldn't return, and forgot the road he took when he came." Yung Chia also said, "Mind is the organ, phenomena are the objects: both are like flaws in a mirror. When the defilement of the flaws is gone, only then does the light appear; when mind and phenomena are both forgotten, nature is identical to reality." When you get here, be like a fool, like a blockhead, and then you will perceive this public case. If you do not reach this realm, you will just be running around in the words; what end will there ever be?

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

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# The Dialogue of Manjusri and Wu Cho

## POINTER

Determining dragons and snakes, distinguishing jewels and stones, separating the profound and the naive, to settle all uncertainty: if you haven't an eye on your forehead and a talisman under your elbow, time and again you will miss the point immediately. Right at this very moment seeing and hearing are not obscured; sound and form are purely real. Tell me, is it black? Is it white? Is it crooked? Is it straight? At this point, how will you discriminate?

## CASE

Manjusri asked Wu Cho, "Where have you just come from?"<sup>1</sup>

Wu Cho said, "The South."<sup>2</sup>

Manjusri said, "How is the Buddhist Teaching being carried on in the South?"<sup>3</sup>

Wu Cho said, "Monks of the Last Age have little regard for the rules of discipline."<sup>4</sup>

Manjusri said, "How numerous are the congregations?"<sup>5</sup>

Wu Cho said, "Some three hundred, some five hundred."<sup>6</sup>

Wu Cho asked Manjusri, "How is it being carried on hereabouts?"<sup>7</sup>

Manjusri said, "Ordinary people and sages dwell together; dragons and snakes intermingle."<sup>8</sup>

Wu Cho said, "How numerous are the congregations?"<sup>9</sup>

Manjusri said, "In front, three by three; in back, three by three."<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. It is necessary to pose the question. There is still this news.
2. He sticks his head up from his nest in the weeds. Why should he hoist it on to his eyebrows? There is nothing outside the great vastness; why is there nevertheless a South?
3. If he asked someone else, a disaster would happen. It still lingers on his teeth and lips.
4. A truthful man is hard to find.
5. At that moment I would immediately give him a shout. With one nudge he pushes him over.
6. They are all wild fox spirits. After all he's let slip.
7. He's pushed! Immediately he turns the spear around and comes back with it.
8. He's suffered quite a loss. In fact his feet are frantic, his hands in confusion.
9. Give me back the words. Still he can't be let go.
10. Crazy words, insane talk. But tell me, how many are they? Even the Great Compassionate One with a thousand hands could not count them all.

## COMMENTARY

When Wu Cho was visiting Mt. Wu T'ai, when he came to a place on the way where it was wild and rough, Manjusri produced a temple to take him in for the night. So he asked, "Where have you just come from?" Cho said, "The South." Manjusri asked, "How is the Buddhist Teaching being carried on in the South?" Cho said, "Monks of this Last Age have little regard for the rules of discipline." Manjusri asked, "How numerous are the congregations?" Cho said, "Some three hundred, some five hundred." Wu Cho then asked Manjusri, "How is it being carried on hereabouts?" Manjusri said, "Ordinary people and sages dwell together; dragons and snakes intermingle." Cho asked, "How numerous are the congregations?" Manjusri said, "In front, three by three; in back, three by three."

Then they drank tea; Manjusri held up a crystal bowl and

asked, "Do they also have this in the South?" Cho said, "No." Manjusri said, "What do they usually use to drink tea?" Cho was speechless. After all he took his leave and departed. Manjusri ordered Ch'un T'i the servant boy to see him to the gate. When they got to the portals of the gate, Wu Cho asked the boy, "Before, he said, 'In front three by three; in back, three by three'; how many is this?" The boy said, "O Worthy!" Cho responded "Yes?" The boy said, "How many is this?" Cho also asked, "What temple is this?" The boy pointed beyond the Vajrasattva; when Cho turned his head, the illusory temple and the boy had vanished completely out of sight: it was just an empty valley. Later that place was called the Vajra (Adamantine) Cave.

Later on a monk asked Feng Hsueh, "What is the Master of Ch'ing Liang Mountain?"<sup>a</sup> Hsueh said, "One phrase did not settle Wu Cho's question; to this very day he is still a monk who sleeps in the fields."

If you want to penetrate the peaceful equanimity of actual truth, so that your feet tread upon the real earth, go to Wu Cho's words to get attainment; then naturally though you stay in a cauldron of hot water or the embers of a stove, still you would not feel hot, and though you stay on cold ice, neither would you feel cold.

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off and hold still, in the next moment you will reach this realm.

VERSE

*The thousand peaks twist and turn, the color of indigo.*

*\*\*But do you see Manjusri? \**

*Who says Manjusri was conversing with him?*

*\*\*Even if it were Samantabhadra, I wouldn't pay any attention. He's already stumbled past. \**

*It is laughable, "How many the people?" on Ch'ing Liang:*

*\*\*Tell me, what is he laughing at? It's already there before speaking of it. \**

*In front three by three, and in back three by three.*

*\*\*Please observe it under your feet. There are thorns in the soft mud. The tea bowl falls to the ground, the dish breaks in seven pieces. \**

COMMENTARY

"The thousand peaks twist and turn, blue as indigo; who says Manjusri was conversing with him?" Some say that Hsueh Tou is just reciting it a second time, without ever eulogizing it. It is just like a monk asked Fa Yen, "What is a drop of water from the source of the Ts'ao stream?" Yen said, "A drop of water from the source of the Ts'ao stream." Also a monk asked Master Hui Chueh of Lung Ya, "How does fundamental purity and clarity suddenly give rise to mountains, rivers, and earth?" Chueh said, "How does fundamental purity and clarity suddenly give rise to mountains, rivers, and earth?" You cannot say either that these were just repetitions.

The One-Eyed Dragon of Min Ch'ao also versified the meaning of this, with the ability to cover heaven and earth; he said,

*Extending throughout the world is the beautiful  
monastery:*

*The Manjusri that fills the eyes is the one conversing.  
Not knowing to open the Buddha-eye at his words,*

*(Wu Cho) turned his head and saw only the blue mountain crags.*

"Extending throughout the world is the beautiful monastery." This refers to the illusory temple nestled in the weeds. This is what is called having the ability to carry out both the provisional and the real together. The Manjusri which fills the eyes is talking; if you don't know how to open the Buddha-eye at his words, when you turn your head you'll only see the blue mountain crags. At such a time, could you call it the realm of Manjusri, Samantabhadra,<sup>b</sup> or Avalokitesvara?<sup>c</sup> In essence it is not this principle. Hsueh Tou just changes Ming Ch'ao's usage; instead he has a needle and thread—"Ten thousand peaks twist and turn, blue as indigo." He does not run afoul of the point and hurt his hand. Within the phrase there is the provisional, there is the real; there is principle, there are phenomena. Who says Manjusri was conversing with him? They talked all night, but he didn't know it was Manjusri.

Later Wu Cho stayed on Mt. Wu T'ai and worked as a cook. Every time Manjusri appeared on the rice pot, Wu Cho lifted the rice stirrer and hit him. Still, this is drawing the bow after the thief has left.

This time, as soon as he said, "How is the Buddhist Teaching being carried on in the South?" he should have hit him right on the spine; then he would have gotten somewhere.

"It's laughable, 'How many are the people?' on Ch'ing Liang." There is a sword in Hsueh Tou's laughter. If you can understand what he's laughing about, you will see the other's saying, "In front three by three; in back three by three."

#### TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

- a. Ch'ing Liang ("Pure and Cool") was another name for Mt. Wu T'ai. One of the five holy mountains of China, it was traditionally thought to be the abode of Manjusri, who symbolizes wisdom and knowledge. The Vajra, or Diamond, is also a symbol of wisdom, because it can cut through everything, while itself being firm and indestructible.
- b. Samantabhadra, universal goodness, is the bodhisattva representing the ultimate principle.
- c. Avalokitesvara is the bodhisattva representing compassion.

# Ch'ang Sha Wandering in the Mountains

## CASE

One day Ch'ang Sha went wandering in the mountains. Upon returning, when he got to the gate,<sup>1</sup> the head monk asked, "Where are you coming from, Master?"<sup>2</sup>

Sha said, "From wandering in the mountains."<sup>3</sup>

The head monk asked, "Where did you go?"<sup>4</sup>

Sha said, "First I went pursuing the fragrant grasses; then I returned following the falling flowers."<sup>5</sup>

The head monk said, "How very much like the sense of springtime."<sup>6</sup>

Sha said, "It even surpasses the autumn dew<sup>a</sup> dripping on the lotuses."<sup>7</sup> Hsueh Tou added the remark, "Thanks for your reply."<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. Today, one day. He has only fallen into the weeds; at first he was falling into the weeds; later he was still falling in the weeds.
2. He still wants to try this old fellow. The arrow has flown past Korea.
3. Don't fall in the weeds. He's suffered quite a loss. A man in the weeds.
4. A thrust. If he had gone anywhere, he couldn't avoid falling into the weeds. They drag each other into a pit of fire.
5. He's let slip quite a bit. From the beginning he's just been sitting in a forest of thorns.
6. He comes following along, adding error to error; one hand uplifts, one hand presses down.
7. He adds mud to dirt. The first arrow was light; the second arrow was deep. What end will there ever be?
8. A group of fellows playing with a mud ball. The three have their crimes listed on the same indictment.

## COMMENTARY

Great Master Chao Hsien of the Deer Park at Ch'ang Sha succeeded to the Dharma of Nan Ch'uan; he was a contemporary of Chao Chou and Tzu Hu. The point of his wit was sharp and swift. If anyone asked about the Teachings, he would then give him an explanation of the Teachings; if someone wanted a verse, he would then give a verse. If you wanted to have a meeting of adepts, then he would have a meeting of adepts with you.

Yang Shan was usually considered foremost in having a sharp intellect. Once as he was enjoying the moon along with Ch'ang Sha, Yang Shan pointed at the moon and said, "Everyone has this; it's just that they can't use it." Sha said, "Quite true. So, shall I have you use it?" Yang Shan said, "Try to use it yourself." Sha kicked him over with one blow. Yang Shan got up and said, "Respected Uncle, you are just like a tiger." Hence, people later called Ch'ang Sha "Ts'en the Tiger."

One day as Sha returned from a stroll in the mountains, the head monk, who was also a man of Sha's congregation, asked him, "Where are you coming from, Master?" Sha said, "I come from a stroll in the mountains." The head monk asked, "Where did you go?" Sha said, "First I went following the fragrant grasses; then I returned pursuing the falling flowers." Only a man who had cut off the ten directions could be like this. The Ancients, in leaving and entering, never ever failed to be mindful of this Matter. See how the host and guest shift positions together; confronting the situation directly, neither overlaps the other. Since he was wandering in the mountains, why did the monk ask, "Where did you go?" If he had been one of today's followers of Ch'an, he would have said, "I came to the inn on Mount Chia." See how that man of old did not have even the slightest hair of reason or judgement, and that he had no place to abide: that is why he said, "First I went following the fragrant grasses; then I returned pursuing the falling flowers." The head monk then followed his idea and said to him "How very much like the sense of springtime!" Sha said, "It even surpasses the autumn dew dripping on the lotuses." Hsueh Tou says on behalf (of the monk), "Thanks for your reply," as the final word. This too falls on both sides but ultimately does not remain on either side.



In the past there was a scholar, Chang Ch'o, who upon reading the *Sutra of the Thousand Names of Buddha*, asked, "Of the hundreds and thousands of Buddhas, I have only heard their names; what lands do they dwell in, and do they convert beings or not?" Ch'ang Sha said, "Since Ts'ui Hao<sup>b</sup> wrote his poems in the Golden Crane Pavillion, have you ever written or not?" Ch'o said, "No." Sha said, "When you have some free time, you should write one."

Ts'en the Tiger's usual way of helping people was like jewels turning, gems revolving; he wanted people to understand immediately on the face of it. The verse says,

#### VERSE

*The earth is clear of any dust—*

Open wide the doors and windows—who is under the eaves? None can miss this. The world is at peace.

*Whose eyes do not open!*

One must emit a great radiant light from his forehead before this is possible. Why scatter dirt and sand?

*First he went following the fragrant grasses,*

He's slipped quite a bit. It's not just one instance of falling into the weeds. Fortunately it happens that he already said this before.

*Then he returned pursuing the falling flowers.*

Everywhere is completely real. Luckily he came back. Under his feet the mud is three feet deep.

*A weary crane<sup>c</sup> alights on a withered tree,*

Accompanying him left and right, he adds a phrase. Still there are so many idle concerns?

*A mad monkey cries on the ancient terrace.*

After all it depends on personal application of effort. It is impossible either to add a phrase or to take a phrase away.

*Ch'ang Sha's boundless meaning—*

I strike. What does the final phrase say? Bury them all in one pit. He's fallen into the ghost cave.

*Bah!*

A man in the weeds; this is drawing the bow after the thief has gone. Still, he can't be let go.

# COMMENTARY

Take this public case along with Yang Shan's asking a monk, "Where have you just come from?" The monk said, "Mount Lu." Yang Shan said, "Did you visit the Five Elders Peak?" The monk said, "I didn't get there." Yang Shan said, "You never visited the mountain at all." Distinguish the black and white, and see if they are the same or if they are different. At this point, mental machinations must come to an end, and conscious knowledge be forgotten, so that over mountains, rivers, and earth, plants, people, and animals you have no leaking at all. If you are not like this, the Ancients called that "still remaining in the realm of surpassing wonder."

Haven't you seen how Yun Men said, "Even if you realize that there is no trouble at all in the mountains, rivers, and earth, still this is a turning phrase: when you do not see any forms, this is only half the issue. You must further realize that there is a time when the whole thing is brought up, the single opening upward; only then can you sit in peace?" If you can pass through, then as before mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers; each abides in its own state, each occupies its own body. You will be like a completely blind man. Chao Chou said,

*The cock crows in the early morning;  
Sadly I see as I rise how worn out I am;  
I haven't a kilt or a shirt,  
Just the semblance of a robe.  
My loincloth has no seat, my pants no opening—  
On my head are three or five pecks of grey ashes.  
Originally I intended to practice to help save others;  
Who would have suspected that instead I would  
become an idiot?*

If one can truly reach this realm, whose eyes would not open? Though you go through upsets and spills, all places are this realm, all places are this time and season. "The ten directions

are without walls, and the four quarters are without gates." That is why he said, "First I went following the fragrant grasses; then I returned pursuing the falling flowers." Skillful indeed, Hsueh Tou just goes and adds a phrase to his left and a phrase to his right, just like a poem. "The weary crane alights on a withered tree. The mad monkey cries on an ancient terrace." When Hsueh Tou has drawn it out this far, he realizes how he has indulged himself: suddenly he says, "Ch'ang Sha's boundless meaning—Bah!" This was like having a dream but suddenly awakening. Though Hsueh Tou gave a shout, he still didn't completely finish the matter. If it were up to me, I would do otherwise: Ch'ang Sha's boundless meaning—dig out the ground and bury it deeper.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. According to Tenkei Denson, the head monk thought there was still some warmth, but Ch'ang Sha is saying No, it's clear and cool, colder than the autumn dew.
- b. Ts'ui Hao was a statesman of the Northern Wei dynasty, noted for his sagacity, who also composed literary works. Golden Crane Pavillion was in Hupeh west of Wu Ch'ang, so situated as to look out over a vast vista.
- c. The crane is associated with longevity.

# P'an Shan's There Is Nothing in the World

## POINTER

It is futile effort to linger in thought over the action of a lightning bolt: when the sound of thunder fills the sky, you will hardly have time to cover your ears. To unfurl the red flag of victory over your head, whirl the twin swords behind your ears—if not for a discriminating eye and a familiar hand, how could anyone be able to succeed?

Some people lower their heads and linger in thought, trying to figure it out with their intellect. They hardly realize that they are seeing ghosts without number in front of their skulls.

Now tell me, without falling into intellect, without being caught up in gain or loss, when suddenly there is such a demonstration to awaken you, how will you reply? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

P'an Shan imparted the words which said, "There is nothing in the triple world;<sup>1</sup> where can mind be found?"<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. Once the arrow has left the bowstring, it has no power to come back. The moon's brightness shines, revealing the night traveller. He has hit the mark. One who knows the law fears it. He ought to have been hit before he finished talking.
2. Best not fool people! It's not worth bringing up again. Examine for yourself. Immediately striking, I would say, "What is this?"

## COMMENTARY

Master Pao Chi of Mount P'an in Yu Chou in the far north was a venerable adept succeeding to Ancestor Ma. Later he produced one man, P'u Hua. When the Master was about to pass on, he said to the community, "Is there really anyone who can depict my true likeness?" The people all drew likenesses and presented them to the Master. The Master scolded every one of them. P'u Hua came forth and said, "I can depict it." The Master said, "Why do you not show it to me?" P'u Hua immediately turned a somersault and left. The Master said, "Later on, this guy will appear crazy to teach others."

One day, he said to the community, "There is nothing in the triple world; where can mind be found? The elements are basically empty; how can a Buddha abide? The polar star does not move; quiet and still, without traces, once presented face to face, there is no longer anything else."

Hsueh Tou takes up two phrases and eulogizes them; this here is raw gold, a rough jewel. Have you not heard it said, "Curing illness does not depend on a donkey-load of medicine." Why do I say I would have hit him before he finished speaking? Just because he was wearing stocks, giving evidence of his crimes.

An Ancient said, "When you hear mention of the phrase beyond sound, do not go seeking it in your mind." But tell me, what was his meaning? Just like a rushing stream crossing a sword; thunder rolls, a comet flies. If you hesitate and seek it in thought, even though a thousand Buddhas appeared in the world, you would grope around without finding them. But if you are one who has deeply entered the inner sanctum, pierced the bone and pierced the marrow, seen all the way through, then P'an Shan will have suffered a loss. If you are smeared with mud and dripping with water, turning about on the pile of sound and form, you have still never seen P'an Shan even in a dream. My late master Wu Tsu said, "Pass beyond the Other Side, and only then will you have any freedom."

Have you not seen how the Third Patriarch said, "Grasp it, and you lose balance and surely enter a false path. Let go naturally; there is neither going nor abiding in essence." If here you say that there is neither Buddha nor Dharma, still you have

gone into a ghost cave. The Ancients called this the Deep Pit of Liberation. Originally it was a good causal basis, but it brings on a bad result. That is why it is said that a non-doing, unconcerned man is still oppressed by golden chains. Still, you must have penetrated all the way to the bottom before you will realize it. If you can say what cannot be said, can do what cannot be done, this is called the place of turning the body. There is nothing in the triple world; where can mind be found? If you make an intellectual interpretation, you will just die at his words; Hsueh Tou's view is piercing and penetrating. Thus he versifies:

## VERSE

*There is nothing in the triple world;  
The words are still in our ears.*

*Where can mind be found?*

It is not worth the trouble to mention again. See for yourself. I strike and say, "What is this?"

*The white clouds form a canopy;  
Adding a head to a head. A thousand layers, ten thousand layers.*

*The flowing spring makes a lute—  
Do you hear it? They come along with each other. Each hearing is enough to lament.*

*One tune, two tunes; no one understands.  
It does not fall into A or B; it has nothing to do with D or E. He is going by a side road. The five sounds and six notes are all distinctly clear. Take what's yours and get out.  
When you hear it, you go deaf.*

*When the rain has passed, the autumn water is deep in the evening pond.  
The thunder is so swift, there's no time to cover the ears. After all he's dragging in mud and dripping with water. Where is he? Immediately I strike.*

## COMMENTARY

"There is nothing in the triple world; where can mind be found?" Hsueh Tou makes a verse which resembles the Flower Garland Cosmos.<sup>a</sup> Some people say he sings it out from the midst of nothingness, but anyone with his eyes open would never understand in this way. Hsueh Tou goes to (P'an Shan's) side and drapes two phrases on him, saying, "The white clouds form a canopy; the flowing spring makes a lute."

When Su Tung P'o, scholar of the Imperial Han Lin Academy, saw Chao Chueh, he made a verse which said,

*The sound of the valley stream is itself the Vast  
Eternal Tongue;  
Are not the colors of the mountains the Pure Body?  
Since evening, eighty-four thousand verses;  
Another day, how could I quote them to others?*

Hsueh Tou borrows the flowing spring to make a long tongue; that is why he says, "No one understands." The harmony of this tune requires you to be a connoisseur before you can appreciate it. If you are not such a person, it is useless to take the trouble to incline an ear to it. An Ancient said, "Even a deaf man can sing a foreign song; good or bad, high or low, he doesn't hear at all." Yun Men said, "When it is raised, if you do not pay attention, you will miss it; if you want to think about it, in what aeon will you ever awaken?" Raising is the essence, paying attention is the function; if you can see before it is brought up, before any indications are distinguishable, then you will occupy the essential bridge; if you can see at the moment when the indications are distinguishable, then you will have shining and function. If you see after the indications are distinct, you will fall into intellection.

Hsueh Tou is exceedingly compassionate, and goes on to say to you, "When the rain has passed, the autumn water is deep in the evening pond." This verse has been discussed and judged by someone who praised Hsueh Tou for having the talent of a Han Lin scholar.<sup>b</sup> "The rain passed, the autumn water is deep in the evening pond." Still you must set eyes on it quickly; if you tarry in doubt, then you will look without seeing.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Flower Garland Cosmos, where all are in each and each is in all, as set out in the *Hua Yen Sutra*.
- b. During T'ang times the dynasty established the Han Lin "Academy" to draw on the services of talented literary men. To have the ability of a Han Lin scholar means to have superlative talent.



# Feng Hsueh's Workings of the Iron Ox<sup>a</sup>

## POINTER

If we discuss the gradual, it is going against the ordinary to merge with the Way: in the midst of a bustling market place, seven ways up and down and eight ways across.

If we discuss the sudden, it doesn't leave a hint of a trace; a thousand sages cannot find it.

If, on the other hand, we do not set up sudden or gradual, then what? To a quick person, one word; to a quick horse, one blow of the whip. At such a time, who is the master? As a test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

At the government headquarters in Ying Chou, Feng Hsueh entered the hall and said,<sup>1</sup> "The Patriarchal Masters' Mind Seal is formed like the workings of the Iron Ox:<sup>2a</sup> when taken away, the impression remains;<sup>3</sup> when left there, then the impression is ruined.<sup>4</sup> But if neither removed nor left there,<sup>5</sup> is sealing right or is not sealing right?"<sup>6</sup>

At that time there was a certain Elder Lu P'i who came forth and said, "I have the workings of the Iron Ox:<sup>7</sup> please, Teacher, do not impress the seal."<sup>8</sup>

Hsueh said, "Accustomed to scouring the oceans fishing for whales, I regret to find instead a frog crawling in the muddy sand."<sup>9</sup>

P'i stood there thinking.<sup>10</sup> Hsueh shouted and said, "Elder, why do you not speak further?"<sup>11</sup> P'i hesitated;<sup>12</sup> Hsueh hit him with his whisk.<sup>13</sup> Hsueh said, "Do you still remember the words? Try to quote them."<sup>14</sup> As P'i was about to open his mouth,<sup>15</sup> Hsueh hit him again with his whisk.

The Governor said, "The Buddhist Law and the Law of Kings are the same."<sup>16</sup>

Hsueh said, "What principle have you seen?"<sup>17</sup>

The Governor said, "When you do not settle what is to be settled, instead you bring about disorder."<sup>18</sup>

Hseuh thereupon descended from his seat.<sup>19</sup>

#### NOTES

1. He explains Ch'an in public; what is he saying?
2. Thousands of people, ten thousands of people cannot budge it. Where is the impenetrable difficulty? The seal of the three essentials opens, without running afoul of the point.
3. The true imperative must be carried out. Wrong!
4. A second offense is not permitted. Observe the time when the imperative is being carried out. A thrust! Immediately I strike.
5. See how there is no place to put it. How difficult to understand!
6. The heads of everyone in the world appear and disappear. The design is already showing. But I only ask that you turn over the meditation seat and disperse the great assembly with shouts.
7. He's fished out one who's "awakened in the dark." Nevertheless, he's unusual.
8. Good words; nevertheless, he's wrong.
9. Like a falcon catching a pigeon. His jewel net extends throughout space. The wonder horse runs a thousand miles.
10. What a pity! Still, there's a place for him to show himself; what a pity to let it go.
11. He captures the flag and steals the drum. The boiling turmoil has come.
12. Three times he has died. A double case.
13. Well struck! This order requires such a man to carry it out.
14. What is the need? He adds frost upon snow.
15. Once having died, he won't come to life again. This fellow makes others out to be fools. He has run into (Feng Hsueh's) poison hand.
16. Clearly. After all, they've been seen through by a bystander.
17. He too gives a good thrust; he has turned the spearpoint around and come back with it.
18. He seems to be right, but he's not really right. (Still,) you must realize that the bystander has eyes. When someone of the eastern house dies, someone of the western house helps in the mourning.
19. He adds error to error. Seeing the situation, he adjusts. Now the task of study is completed.

## COMMENTARY

Feng Hsueh was a venerable adept in the lineage of Lin Chi.

First Lin Chi was in Huang Po's community. As he was planting pine trees, Huang Po said to him, "Deep in the mountains here, why plant so many pine trees?" Chi said, "For one thing, to provide scenery for the monastery; second, to make a signpost for people of later generations." Having spoken, he hoed the ground once. Po said, "Although you are right, you have already suffered twenty blows of my staff." Chi struck the ground one more time and whistled under his breath. Po said, "With you, my school will greatly flourish in the world."

Che of Ta Kuei said, "Lin Chi in his way seemed to invite trouble in a peaceful area; nevertheless, only when immutable in the face of danger can one be called a real man."

Huang Po said, "My school, coming to you, will greatly flourish in the world." He seems to be fond of his child, unaware of being unseemly.

Later, Kuei Shan asked Yang Shan, "Did Huang Po at that time only entrust his bequest to Lin Chi alone, or is there yet anyone else?" Yang Shan said, "There is, but the age is so remote that I do not want to mention it to you, Master." Kuei Shan said, "Although you are right, I still want to know; just mention it and let's see." Yang Shan said, "One man will point south; in Wu-yueh the order will be carried out, and coming to a great wind, then it will stop." This foretold of Feng Hsueh ("Wind Cave").

Feng Hsueh first studied with Hsueh Feng for five years. As it happened, he asked for help with this story: "As Lin Chi entered the hall, the head monks of both halls simultaneously shouted. A monk asked Lin Chi, 'Are there guest and host, or not?' Chi said, 'Guest and host are evident.'" Feng Hsueh asked, "What is the inner meaning of this?" Hsueh Feng said, "In the past I went along with Yen T'ou or Ch'in Shan to see Lin Chi; on the way, we heard he had already passed on. If you want to understand his talk about guest and host, you should call upon venerable adepts in the stream of his school."

One day he finally saw Nan Yuan. He recited the preceding story and said, "I have come especially to see you personally." Nan Yuan said, "Hsueh Feng is an Ancient Buddha."

One time he saw Ching Ch'ing. Ch'ing asked him, "Where have you just come from?" Hsueh said, "I come from the East." Ch'ing said, "And did you cross the little (Ts'ao) river?" Hsueh said, "The great ship sails alone through the sky; there are no little rivers to cross." Ch'ing said, "Birds cannot fly across mirror lake and picture mountain; have you not merely overheard another's remark?" Hsueh said, "Even the sea fears the power of a warship; sails flying through the sky, it crosses the five lakes." Ch'ing raised his whisk and said, "What about this?" Hsueh said, "What is this?" Ch'ing said, "After all, you don't know." Hsueh said, "Appearing, disappearing, rolling up and rolling out, I act the same as you, Teacher." Ch'ing said, "Casting auguring sticks, you listen to the empty sound; fast asleep, you are full of gibberish." Hsueh said, "When a marsh is wide, it can contain a mountain; a cat can subdue a leopard." Ch'ing said, "I forgive your crime and pardon your error; you better leave quickly." Hsueh said, "If I leave, I lose." Then he went out; when he got to the Dharma Hall, he said to himself, "Big man, the case is not yet finished; how then can you quit?" Then he turned around and went into the abbot's room. As Ching Ch'ing sat there, Hsueh asked, "I have just now offered my ignorant view and insulted your venerable countenance; humbly favored by the Teacher's compassion, I have not yet been given punishment for my crime." Ching Ch'ing said, "Just awhile ago you said you came from the East: did you not come from Ts'ui Yen?" Hsueh said, "Hsueh Tou actually lies east of Pao Kai." Ching Ch'ing said, "If you don't chase the lost sheep, crazy interpretations cease. Instead you come here and recite poems." Hsueh said, "When you meet a swordsman on the road, you should show your sword; do not offer poetry to one who is not a poet." Ch'ing said, "Put the poetry away right now and try to use your sword a little." Hsueh said, "A decapitated man carried the sword away." Ch'ing said, "You not only violate the method of the teaching; you also show your own fat-headedness." Hsueh said, "Unless I violate the method of the teaching, how could I awaken to the mind of an Ancient Buddha?" Ch'ing said, "What do you call the mind of an Ancient Buddha?" Hsueh said, "Again you grant your allowance; now what do you have, Teacher?" Ch'ing said, "This patch-robed one from the East cannot distinguish beans from wheat. I have only heard of ending without finishing; how can you

finish by forcing an end?" Hsueh said, "The immense billows rise a thousand fathoms; the clear waves are not other than water." Ch'ing said, "When one phrase cuts off the flow, myriad impulses cease." Hsueh thereupon bowed. Ch'ing tapped him three times with his whisk and said, "Exceptional indeed. Now sit and have tea."

When Feng Hsueh first came to Nan Yuan, he entered the door without bowing. Yuan said, "When you enter the door, you should deal with the host." Hsueh said, "I ask the Teacher to make a definite distinction." Yuan slapped his knee with his left hand. Hsueh immediately shouted. Yuan slapped his knee with his right hand. Hsueh again shouted. Yuan raised his left hand and said, "This one I concede to you." Then he raised his right hand and said, "But what about this one?" Hsueh said, "Blind!" Yuan then raised his staff. Hsueh said, "What are you doing? I will take that staff away from you and hit you, Teacher; don't say I didn't warn you. Yuan then threw the staff down and said, "Today I have been made a fool of by this yellow-faced riverlander." Hsueh said, "Teacher, it seems you are unable to hold your bowl, yet are falsely claiming you're not hungry." Yuan said, "Haven't you ever reached this place?" Hsueh said, "What kind of talk is this?" Yuan said, "I just asked." Hsueh said, "Still I can't let you go." Yuan said, "Sit awhile and drink some tea."

See how an excellent student naturally has a sharp and dangerous edge to his personality. Even Nan Yuan couldn't really handle him. The next day, Nan Yuan just posed an ordinary question, saying "Where did you spend this summer?" Hsueh said, "I passed the summer along with Attendant Kuo at the Deer Gate." Yuan said, "So really you had already personally seen an adept when you came here." Yuan also said, "What did he say to you?" Hsueh said, "From beginning to end he only taught me to always be the master." Yuan immediately struck him and drove him out of the abbot's room; he said, "What is the use of a man who accepts defeat?"

Hsueh henceforth submitted. In Nan Yuan's community he worked as the gardener. One day Nan Yuan came to the garden and questioned him; he said, "How do they bargain for the staff in the South?" Hsueh said, "They make a special bargain. How do they bargain for it here, Teacher?" Nan Yuan raised his staff and said, "Under the staff, acceptance of birthlessness; facing

the situation without deferring to the teacher." At this Feng Hsueh opened up in great enlightenment.

At this time the five dynasties were divided and at war. The governor of Ying Chou invited the Master (Feng Hsueh) to pass the summer there. At this time the one school of Lin Chi greatly flourished. Whenever he questioned and answered, or gave out pointers, invariably his words were sharp and fresh; gathering flowers, forming brocade, each word had a point.

One day the governor requested the Master to enter the hall to teach the assembly. The Master said, "The Patriarchal Teacher's Mind Seal is formed like the workings of the Iron Ox. Removed, the impression remains; left, the impression is ruined. But if you neither take it away nor keep it there, is it right to use the seal or not?"

Why is it not like the workings of a stone man or a wooden horse, only like the workings of an Iron Ox? There is no way for you to move it: wherever you go the seal remains; as soon as you stop, the seal is broken, causing you to shatter into a hundred fragments. But if you neither go nor stay, should you use the seal or not? See how he gives out indications; you might say there is bait on the hook.

At this time there was an Elder Lu P'i in the audience. He also was a venerable adept in the tradition of Lin Chi. He dared to come forth and reply to his device; thus he turned his words and made a question, undeniably unique; "I have the workings of an Iron Ox; I ask you, Master, not to impress the seal." But what could he do? Feng Hsueh was an adept; he immediately replied to him, saying, "Accustomed to scouring the oceans fishing for whales, I regret to find instead a frog crawling in the muddy river sand." And there is an echo in the words. Yun Men said, "Trailing a hook in the four seas, just fishing for a hideous dragon; the mysterious device beyond convention is to seek out those who understand the self."

In the vast ocean, twelve buffalo carcasses are used as bait for the hooks; instead he has just snagged a frog. But there is nothing mysterious or wonderful in these words; and neither is there any principle to judge. An Ancient said, "It is easy to see in the phenomenon: if you try to figure it out in your mind, you will lose contact with it." Lu P'i stood there thinking: "Seeing it, if you don't take it, it will be hard to find again even in a

thousand years." What a pity! That is why it is said, "Even if you can explain a thousand scriptures and commentaries, it is hard to utter a phrase appropriate to the moment."

The fact is that Lu P'i was searching for a good saying to answer Feng Hsueh; he didn't want to carry out the order, and suffered Feng Hsueh's thoroughgoing use of his ability to "capture the flag and steal the drum." He was unremittingly pressed back, and simply couldn't do anything. As a proverb says, "When an army is defeated, it cannot be swept up with a grass broom." In the very beginning it is still necessary to seek a tactic to oppose the adversary, but if you wait till you've come up with one, your head will have fallen to the ground.

The governor too had studied a long time with Feng Hsueh; he knew to say, "The Law of Buddhas and the Law of Kings are one." Hsueh said, "What have you seen?" The governor said, "If you do not settle what should be settled, instead you bring on disorder." Feng Hsueh was all one whole mass of spirit, like a gourd floating on the water; press it down and it rolls over; push it and it moves. He knew how to explain the Dharma according to the situation; if it did not accord with the situation, it would just be false talk. Hsueh thereupon left the seat.

#### VERSE

*Having caught Lu P'i, he makes him mount the Iron Ox:*

Among a thousand people, ten thousand, still he wants to show his skill. The general of a defeated army need not be decapitated a second time.

*The spear and armor of the Three Profundities have never been easily opposed;*

The one whose move it is, is confused. He accepts disaster like receiving good fortune and accepts submission like encountering opposition.

*By the castle of the King of Ch'u, the tidal water—*

What tidal water are you talking about? Vastly extensive, it fills heaven and earth. Even were it the four seas, he would still reverse their flow.

*Shouting once he caused its flow to turn back.*

This one shout not only cuts off your tongue; oh! it startles the Iron Ox of Shensi into a run and frightens the Great Colossus of Chia Chou<sup>b</sup> to death.

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou knew Feng Hsueh to have such a style, so he eulogized him by saying, "Having caught Lu P'i, he mounts him on the Iron Ox; the spear and armor of the three profundities have never been easily opposed." In the tradition of Lin Chi there are three profundities and three essentials: within any one phrase there must be inherent three profundities; in one profundity there must be inherent three essentials. A monk asked Lin Chi, "What is the primary phrase?" Chi said,

*When the seal of the three essentials is lifted, the  
red mark is narrow;  
Without admitting hesitation, host and guest are  
distinct.*

"What is the secondary phrase?"

*How can subtle discernment admit of no question-  
ing?  
Expedients do not go against the ability to cut off  
the streams.*

"What is the third phrase?"

*Just observe the playing of puppets on the stage:  
The pulling of the strings depends on the man be-  
hind the scenes.*

In Feng Hsueh's one phrase, he is immediately equipped with the spear and armor of the three profundities; with seven accoutrements<sup>c</sup> at his side, it is not easy to oppose him. If he were not so, how could he have handled Lu P'i?

Finally, Hsueh Tou wants to bring out the active edge of the Lin Chi line: do not speak only of Lu P'i—even by the castle of the King of Ch'u, the great waves, vast and extensive, the white breakers flooding the sky, all return to the source; just using a single shout is all that's needed to make them reverse their course.



TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Iron Ox is supposed to have been built by the legendary King Yu to stem the flood of the Yellow River some four thousand years ago; its head is in Honan, and its tail is in Hopei.
- b. A huge stone image of Maitreya, said to be three hundred sixty feet high.
- c. The seven items that make up the teacher's accoutrements: 1) great capacity and great function; 2) swiftness of wit and eloquence; 3) wondrous spirituality of speech; 4) the active edge to kill or bring to life; 5) wide learning and broad experience; 6) clarity of mirroring awareness; 7) freedom to appear or disappear. "The seven accoutrements" can also refer to a warrior's set of equipment.

# Yun Men's Flowering Hedge

## POINTER

One who can take action on the road is like a tiger in the mountains; one immersed in worldly understanding is like a monkey in a cage. If you want to know the meaning of buddha-nature, you should observe times and seasons, causes and conditions. If you want to smelt pure gold which has been refined a hundred times, you need the forge and bellows of a master. Now tell me, when one's great function appears, what can be used to test him?

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "What is the Pure Body of Reality?"<sup>1</sup>

Yun Men said, "A flowering hedge."<sup>2</sup>

The monk asked, "What is it like when one goes on in just such a way?"<sup>3</sup>

Yun Men said, "A golden-haired lion."<sup>4a</sup>

## NOTES

1. He sees the sixteen-foot golden body (of Buddha) in a heap of dust. Mottled and mixed up; what is it?
2. If the point of the question is not real, the answer comes across crude. Striking, resounding (everywhere). The bent does not hide the straight.
3. He swallows the date whole. Why indulge in stupidity?
4. He is both praising and censuring; two faces of one die. He adds error to error—what is going on in his mind?

## COMMENTARY

People, do you know the point of this monk's questions and the point of Yun Men's answers? If you do know, their two mouths are alike without a single tongue. If you do not know, you will not avoid being fatheaded.

A monk asked Hsuan Sha, "What is the Pure Body of Reality?" Sha said, "Dripping with pus." He had the adamant eye: as a test, I ask you to try to discern it.

Yun Men was not the same as others. Sometimes he held still and stood like a wall ten miles high, with no place for you to draw near. Sometimes he would open out a path for you, die along with you and live along with you.

Yun Men's tongue was very subtle; some people say he was answering him figuratively; but if you understand it this way, then tell me where Yun Men is at. This was a household affair; do not try to figure it out from outside. This was the reason Pai Chang said, "Manifold appearances and myriad forms, and all spoken words, each should be turned and returned to oneself and made to turn freely." Going to where life springs forth, he immediately speaks; if you try to discuss it and seek it in thought, immediately you have fallen into the secondary phase. Yung Chia said, "When the Body of Reality awakens fully, there is not a single thing; the inherent nature of the original source is the natural real Buddha."

Yun Men tested this monk; the monk was also a member of his household and was himself a longtime student. He knew the business of the household, so he went on to say, "What is it like to go on like this?" Men said, "A golden-haired lion." But tell me, is this agreeing with him or not agreeing with him? Is this praising him or censuring him? Yen T'ou said, "If you engage in a battle, each individual stands in a pivotal position." It is also said, "He studies the living phrase; he does not study the dead phrase. If you get understanding at the living phrase, you will never ever forget; if you get understanding at the dead phrase, you will be unable to save yourself."

Another monk asked Yun Men, "Is it true or not that 'the Buddha Dharma is like the moon in the water?'" Yun Men said, "There is no way through the clear waves." The monk went on to say, "How did you manage?" Yun Men said,

"Where does this second question come from?" The monk said, "How is it when going on in just this way?" Yun Men said, "Further complications block the mountain path."

You must realize that this matter does not rest in words and phrases: like sparks from struck flint, like the brilliance of flashing lightning, whether you reach it or not, you still will not avoid losing your body and life. Hsueh Tou is someone who is there: so he produces his verse from that very place.

#### VERSE

*A flowering hedge:*

The words are still in our ears.

*Don't be fatheaded!*

Such people are numerous as hemp and millet seeds. Still, there are some who are not.

*The marks are on the balance arm, not on the scale pan.*

Too complicated! Everyone should go to his own place and introspect. He hasn't avoided talking about principle.

*"So just be like this"—*

He swallows the date whole.

*How pointless!*

Take what's yours and get out. Clearly. You should not mistakenly blame Yun Men.

*A golden-haired lion—everybody look!*

He lets out one or a half. Still they are dogs. Yun Men is also a man from P'u Chou escorting a thief.

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou sizes up the audience to give his order; he makes the harpstring move and distinguishes the tune. With each phrase he continues the judgement. This one verse is not at variance with the form for quoting the Ancients: "A flowering hedge"; then he says, "Don't be fatheaded." People all say that Yun Men was responding figuratively; they all make up emotional interpretations to understand him. Hsueh Tou therefore

gives his own fodder and says, "Don't be fatheaded." All in all, Yun Men's meaning does not lie where the flowering hedge is; that is why Hsueh Tou says, "The marks are on the balance arm, not on the scale pan." This one phrase is excessively indulgent. In the water there is originally no moon; the moon is in the sky. This is like the marks being on the balance arm, not on the scale pan. But tell me, which is the balance? If you can discern it clearly, you will not turn away from Hsueh Tou.

When that man of old got to this point, he was undeniably compassionate. Clearly he says to you, "It's not here; it's over there." But tell me, what place is that "over there"? This finishes the eulogizing of their first statements; afterwards he versifies the monk's saying, "What is it like when just going on like this?" Hsueh Tou says that this monk still has no point. But tell me, is this meeting in the light or meeting in darkness? Did he speak this way from understanding, or did he speak thus without understanding? "A golden-haired lion—everyone look!" Do you see the golden-haired lion? Look!

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Golden-haired Lion is used in the Hua Yen school to symbolize the cosmos as the mutual interpenetration of the universal and the particular, of principle (relativity, emptiness of inherent fixed reality) and phenomena (the myriads of things and events). The Lion's whole body is reflected in each and every hair: thus there is an infinity of infinities within the whole, with each particular hair reflected in and reflecting the others *ad infinitum*. In a general way the Golden-haired Lion represents reality, or the embodiment of reality. Manjusri, the bodhisattva who stands for wisdom and knowledge, is depicted as riding the Golden-haired Lion.

# Nan Ch'uan's It's like a Dream

## POINTER

Cease and desist; then an iron tree blooms with flowers. Is there anyone? Is there? A clever lad loses his profits; even though he is free in seven ways up and down and eight ways across, he cannot avoid having another pierce his nostrils. But tell me, where is his error? To test, I quote this to see.

## CASE

As the officer Lu Hsuan was talking with Nan Ch'uan, he said, "Master of the Teachings Chao said, 'Heaven, earth, and I have the same root; myriad things and I are one body.' This is quite marvelous."<sup>1</sup>

Nan Ch'uan pointed to a flower in the garden.<sup>2</sup> He called to the officer and said, "People these days see this flower as a dream."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. He's making a living in a ghost cave. A picture of a cake cannot satisfy hunger. This is also haggling in the weeds.
2. What is he saying? Bah! The scriptures have teachers of scriptures, the treatises have teachers of treatises: it's no business of a patchrobed monk. Bah! A powerful man in that instance would have uttered a turning word, and not only cut off Nan Ch'uan, but thereby cause all the patchrobed monks to show some energy.
3. When the mandarin duck embroidery is done, you may look at them, but do not give the golden needle away to anyone. Don't talk in your sleep! You have drawn the golden oriole down from his willow branch.

## COMMENTARY

The officer Lu Hsuan studied for a long time with Nan Ch'uan. He always kept his mind on essential nature, and he immersed himself in the *Discourses of Chao*. One day as they sat, he happened to bring up these two lines, considering them remarkable. He questioned, "Master of the Teachings Chao said, 'Heaven, earth, and I have the same root; myriad things and I are one body.' This is quite marvelous." Master of the Teachings Seng Chao was an eminent monk of Chin times (latter 4th–early 5th centuries A.D.); he was together with Tao Sheng, Tao Jung, and Seng Jui in the school of Kumarajiva. They were called the Four Sages.

When (Seng Chao) was young, he enjoyed reading Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu. Later, as he was copying the old translation of the Vimalakirti Scripture, he had an enlightenment. Then he knew that Chuang and Lao still were not really thoroughgoing. Therefore he compiled all the scriptures and composed four discourses.

What Chuang and Lao intended to say was that "heaven and earth are greatness of form; my form is also thus; we are alike born in the midst of empty nothingness." Chuang and Lao's overall meaning just discusses equalizing things; Seng Chao's overall meaning says that nature all returns to self. Have you not seen how his discourse says, "The ultimate man is empty and hollow, without form; yet none of the myriad things are not his own doing. Who can understand that myriad things are his own self? Only a sage, I wot."

Although there are spirits and there are humans, there are the wise and the sage, each is distinct, but all alike have one nature and one substance.

An Ancient said, "Heaven and earth, the whole world, is just one self; when cold, it is cold throughout heaven and earth; when hot, it is hot throughout heaven and earth. When it exists, all throughout heaven and earth exists; when it doesn't exist, heaven and earth do not exist. When affirmed, all throughout heaven and earth is; when denied, all throughout heaven and earth is not."

Fa Yen said,

*He he he I I I*

*South north east west, everything is all right.*

*All right or not all right,*

*Only for me there is nothing not all right.*

That is why it was said, "In the heavens and on earth, only I alone am honorable." As Shih T'ou read the *Discourse of Chao*, when he got to this place, "Understand myriad things as one-self," he was vastly and greatly enlightened. Later he composed the book *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* ("Merging of Difference and Sameness"), which also does not go beyond this meaning.

See how (Lu Hsuan) questioned; tell me, what root do they share? Which body do they have in common? When he got here, still he was undeniably unique: how could this be the same as an ordinary man's ignorance of the height of the sky or the breadth of the earth? How could there be such a thing?

Lu Hsuan's questioning in this manner was indeed quite exceptional, but he did not go beyond the meaning of the Teachings. If you say that the meaning of the Teachings is the ultimate paradigm, then why did the World Honored One also raise the flower?<sup>a</sup> What did the Patriarchal Teacher come from the West for?

Nan Ch'uan's way of answering used the grip of a patched robe to pull out the painful spot for the other, and broke up his nest; he pointed at a flower in the garden and called to the officer, saying, "People these days see this flower as though it were a dream." This is like leading the man to the edge of a ten thousand fathom cliff and giving him a push, causing his life to be cut off. If you were pushed over on level ground, even till Maitreya Buddha was born in the world, you still would simply be unable to accomplish the cutting off of life.

It is also like a man in a dream; though he wants to awaken, he cannot wake up; called by another, he awakens. If Nan Ch'uan's eyes were not true, he would certainly have been befuddled by Lu. See how he talks; yet undeniably he is difficult to understand. If the action of your eyes is alive, you will experience it like the superb flavor of ghee; if you are dead, you will hear it and turn it into poison. An Ancient said, "If you see it in phenomena, you'll fall into ordinary feelings; if you go to your intellect to figure it out, after all you will seek without finding." Yen T'ou said, "This is the livelihood of a transcen-



dent man; he just reveals the bit before the eyes, just like a flash of lightning."

Nan Ch'uan's great meaning was like this; he has the capability to capture rhinos and tigers, to judge dragons and snakes. When you get here, you must understand on your own: have you not heard it said, "The single transcending road has not been transmitted by a thousand sages; students toil over forms like moneys grasping at reflections." See how Hsueh Tou brings it out in verse:

#### VERSE

*Seeing, hearing, awareness, knowledge; these are not one and the same—*

In the multitude of forms and myriad appearances, there is not a single thing. Seven flowers, eight blooms.<sup>b</sup> Eye, ear, nose, tongue, body and mind are all at once a hammerhead without a hole.

*Mountains and rivers are not seen in a mirror.*

There is no such scenery here where I am. What is long is of itself long; what is short is of itself short; green is green and yellow is yellow. Where do you see them?

*The frosty sky's moon sets, the night nearly half over;*  
He has led you into the weeds. The whole world has never concealed it. I only fear you will go sit inside a ghost cave.

*With whom will it cast a shadow, cold in the clear pool?*  
Is there anyone? Is there? If they did not sleep on the same bed, how could they know the cover is worn out? Someone who is sad should not speak of it to another who is sad; if he speaks to a sad man, it would sadden him to death.

#### COMMENTARY

Nan Ch'uan's little sleep talk, Hsueh Tou's big sleep talk: although they are dreaming, they are having a good dream. At first there was talk of 'one body'—here he says that they are

not the same: "Seeing, hearing, awareness, and knowledge are not one and the same— / Mountains and rivers are not seen in a mirror." If you say that they are seen in a mirror, and only then illumined, then they are not apart from where the mirror is. Mountains, rivers, and the great earth; plants, trees, and forests—do not use a mirror to observe them. If you use a mirror to observe, then you make it into two parts. Just let mountains be mountains and rivers be rivers. "Each thing abides in its normal state; the mundane aspect always remains."

"Mountains and rivers are not seen in a mirror." Then tell me, where can you see them? Do you understand? When you get here, turn towards: "The frosty sky's moon sets, the night nearly half over"—This Side he has summed up for you; That Side, you must cross by yourself.

But do you realize that Hsueh Tou uses his own thing to help others? "With whom will it cast a shadow, cold in the clear pool?" Do you think he is reflected himself, or do you think he is reflected together with anyone?<sup>c</sup> It is necessary to cut off mental activity and cut off understanding before finally reaching this realm.

Right now, we don't need a clear pool, and we don't have to wait for the moon to set in the frosty sky. Right now, how is it?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This incident marks the beginning of the 'separate transmission' of Ch'an: at the assembly on Vulture Peak, the Buddha raised a flower. No one in the crowd understood his meaning but Mahakasyapa, who gave a slight smile. Thus Buddha recognized Mahakasyapa as the heir to the treasury of the eye of the true teaching.
- b. 'Seven flowers, eight blooms' is one literal translation of a phrase that bears multiple meanings. It can mean profusion, confusion in multiplicity, 'cracked and shattered.' It can also mean opened up, clearly distinct, everything revealed in all its multiplicity.
- c. According to the *Shudensho*, the moon's setting can be interpreted as 'descending,' or shining into the pool, casting a reflection: is it just the moon alone, or is anyone there? The ambiguity of the subject makes this passage difficult to translate, while the ambivalence itself underscores the unity of self and world.

# Chao Chou's Man Who Has Died the Great Death

## POINTER

Where right and wrong are mixed, even the sages cannot know; when going against and with, vertically and horizontally, even the Buddhas cannot know. One who is a man detached from the world, who transcends convention, reveals the abilities of a great man who stands out from the crowd. He walks on thin ice, runs on a sword's edge. He is like the unicorn's horn, like a lotus flower in fire. When he sees someone beyond comparison, he knows they are on the same path. Who is an expert? As a test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Chao Chou asked T'ou Tzu, "How is it when a man who has died the great death returns to life?"<sup>1</sup>

T'ou Tzu said, "He must not go by night: he must get there in daylight."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. There are such things! A thief doesn't strike a poor household. He is accustomed to acting as guest, thus he has a feel for guests.
2. Seeing a cage, he makes a cage. This is a thief recognizing a thief. If he wasn't lying on the same bed, how would he know the coverlet is worn?

## COMMENTARY

Chao Chou asked T'ou Tzu, "How is it when a man who has died the great death returns to life?" T'ou Tzu answered him

saying, "He must not go by night: he must get there in daylight." But say, what time and season is this? A flute with no holes strikes against a felt-pounding board. This is called "a question to test the host"; it is also called "an intentional question." All over they praised T'ou Tzu and Chao Chou for having outstanding eloquence. Though the two old men succeeded to different masters, observe how their active edges accord as one.

One day T'ou Tzu spread the tea setting to entertain Chao Chou. T'ou Tzu himself passed some steamed cakes to Chao Chou, but Chou paid no attention. T'ou Tzu ordered his attendant to give the sesame cakes to Chao Chou. Chou bowed to the attendant three times. But say, what was his meaning? Observe how he always went right to the root to uphold this fundamental thing for the benefit of others.

There was a monk who asked T'ou Tzu, "What is the Way?" T'ou Tzu answered, "The Way." The monk asked, "What is Buddha?" T'ou Tzu answered, "Buddha." Again he asked, "How is it before the golden lock is open?" T'ou Tzu answered, "Open." He asked, "How is it before the golden rooster has crowed?" T'ou Tzu answered, "This sound does not exist." The monk asked, "How is it after he crows?" T'ou Tzu answered, "Each knows the time for himself." His whole life T'ou Tzu's questions and answers were all like this.

Look: when Chao Chou asked, "How is it when a man who has died the great death returns to life?" T'ou Tzu immediately said, "He must not go by night: he must get there in daylight." Direct as sparks struck from stone, like the brilliance of a lightning flash. Only a transcendental man like him could do this.

A man who has died the great death has no Buddhist doctrines and theories, no mysteries and marvels, no gain and loss, no right and wrong, no long and short. When he gets here, he just lets it rest this way. An Ancient said of this, "On the level ground the dead are countless; only one who can pass through the forest of thorns is a good hand." Yet one must pass beyond that Other Side too to begin to attain. Even so, for present day people even to get to this realm is already difficult to achieve.

If you have any leanings or dependence, any interpretative understanding, then there is no connection. Master Che called

this "vision that is not purified." My late teacher Wu Tsu called it "the root of life not cut off." One must die the great death once, then return to life. Master Yung Kuang of central Chekiang said, "If you miss at the point of their words, then you're a thousand miles from home. In fact you must let go your hands while hanging from a cliff, trust yourself and accept the experience. Afterwards you return to life again. I can't deceive you—how could anyone hide this extraordinary truth?"

The meaning of Chao Chou's question is like this. T'ou Tzu is an adept, and he didn't turn his back on what Chao Chou asked: it's just that he cut off his feelings and left no traces, so unavoidably he's hard to understand. He just showed the little bit before the eyes. Thus an Ancient said, "If you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with questions. The question is in the answer, and the answer is in the question." It would have been very difficult for someone other than T'ou Tzu to reply when questioned by Chao Chou. But since T'ou Tzu is an expert, as soon as it's raised he knows where it comes down.

#### VERSE

*In life there's an eye—still, it's the same as death.*

The two don't know of each other. Back and forth, coming and going. If Chao Chou wasn't well provided, how could he discern whether T'ou Tzu was monk or lay?

*Why use antiserum to test an adept!*

If you don't test how can you discern the truth? Having met, try to give an examination—what's the harm? I too want to question him.

*Even the Ancient Buddhas, they say, have never arrived.*

Luckily they had companions. Even the thousand sages haven't transmitted it. I don't know either.

*I don't know who can scatter dust and sand.*

There is quite a bit of this right now. (The dust and sand) gets in your eyes whether they're opened or closed. When you bring it up this way, Your Reverence, where does it come down?

## COMMENTARY

"In life there's an eye—still, it's the same as death." Hsueh Tou is a man who knows what is, therefore he can dare to make up verses. An Ancient said, "He studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase." Hsueh Tou says that to have eyes within life is still to be just the same as a dead man. Has he ever died? To have eyes within death is to be the same as a live man. An Ancient said, "Utterly kill a dead man, then you will see a live man. Bring a dead man fully to life, then you will see a dead man."

Though Chao Chou is a live man, he intentionally made up a dead question to test T'ou Tzu. It was like taking a substance that vitiates the character of a medicine in order to test him. That's why Hsueh Tou said, "Why use antiserum to test an adept?" This versifies Chao Chou's questioning.

Afterwards he praises T'ou Tzu: "Even the Ancient Buddhas, they say, have never arrived." Even the ancient Buddhas never got to where the man who has died the great death returns to life—nor have the venerable old teachers ever gotten here. Even old Shakyamuni or the blue-eyed barbarian monk (Bodhidharma) would have to study again before they get it. That is why Hsueh Tou said, "I only grant that the old barbarian knows; I don't allow that he understands."

Hsueh Tou says, "I don't know who can scatter dust and sand." Haven't you heard: a monk asked Ch'ang Ch'ing, "What is the eye of a man of knowledge?" Ch'ing said, "He has a vow not to scatter sand." Pao Fu said, "You mustn't scatter any more of it." All over the country venerable old teachers sit on carved wood seats, using blows and shouts, raising their whisks, knocking on the seat, exhibiting spiritual powers and acting as masters—all of this is scattering sand. But say, how can this be avoided?

# Layman P'ang's Good Snowflakes

## POINTER

Bringing it out unique and alone (is still) dripping with water, dragging through mud. When knocking and resounding occur together (it's still like) a silver mountain, an iron wall.

If you describe and discuss, you see ghosts in front of your skull. If you seek in thought, you sit beneath the black mountain. The bright shining sun lights up the sky. The pure whispering wind circles the earth.

But say, do the Ancients have any obscurities? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

When Layman P'ang took leave of Yao Shan<sup>1</sup>, Shan ordered ten Ch'an travellers to escort him to the gate.<sup>2</sup> The Layman pointed to the snow in the air and said, "Good snowflakes—they don't fall in any other place."<sup>3</sup>

At the time one of the Ch'an travellers named Ch'uan said, "Where do they fall?"<sup>4</sup> The Layman slapped him once.<sup>5</sup> Ch'uan said, "Even a layman shouldn't be so coarse."<sup>6</sup> The Layman said, "Though you call yourself a Ch'an traveller this way, the King of Death still won't let you go."<sup>7</sup> Ch'uan said, "How about you, Layman?"<sup>8</sup> Again the Layman slapped him<sup>9</sup> and said, "Your eyes see like a blind man, your mouth speaks like a mute."<sup>10</sup>

Hsueh Tou said besides, "When P'ang first spoke I just would have made a snowball and hit him with it."<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES

1. This old fellow is acting strange.
2. Yao Shan does not take him lightly. What realm is this? Only a

- patchrobed monk who knows the whole thing could (give P'ang this treatment).
3. He stirs up waves where there's no wind. The finger (he points with) has eyes. There's an echo in this old fellow's words.
  4. On target. He comes on following after P'ang. Of course he climbed onto P'ang's hook.
  5. A hit! As it turns out, the thief that Ch'uan pulled in ransacked his house.
  6. Staring eyes inside a coffin.
  7. The second ladleful of foul water has been poured over him. Why only the King of Death? Here I wouldn't let him go either.
  8. His coarse mind hasn't changed. Again he's asking for a beating. From beginning to end this monk is at a loss.
  9. Of course. Adding frost on top of snow. Having taken a beating, reveal the truth.
  10. He has another conciliatory statement. Again he reads the verdict for him.
  11. Hsueh Tou is right, but he draws the bow after the thief has gone. This is still quite indulgent. Nevertheless, I'd like to see their arrowpoints meet. But what can we do?—Hsueh Tou has fallen into the ghost cave.

#### COMMENTARY

Layman P'ang called on Ma Tsu and Shih T'ou: at both places he had verses (to express his realization).

When he first saw Shih Tou he asked, "What man doesn't keep company with the myriad things?" Before he stopped talking, he had his mouth covered by Shih T'ou and had an awakening. He made up a verse saying,

*My everyday affairs are no different:  
Only I myself naturally harmonize.  
No place is grasped or rejected,  
Nowhere do I go for or against.  
Who considers crimson and purple honorable?  
The green mountains have not a speck of dust.  
Spiritual powers and their wondrous functioning—  
Hauling water and carrying firewood.*



Later P'ang called on Ma Tsu. Again he asked, "What man doesn't keep company with the myriad things?" Tsu said, "Wait till you can swallow all the water in West River in one gulp, then I'll tell you." The Layman emptied out in great enlightenment. He made up a verse saying,

*The ten directions, a common gathering—  
Everyone studies not-doing.  
This is the place where Buddhas are chosen—  
Minds empty, they return successful.*

Since P'ang was an adept, all the various monasteries later welcomed him, and wherever he went they vied to praise him. After he had gotten to Yao Shan and stayed around there quite a while, he went to take leave of Yao Shan. Shan held him in the highest esteem, so he ordered ten Ch'an travellers to see him off. It happened to be snowing at the time: the Layman pointed to the snow and said, "Good snowflakes—they don't fall in any other place."

When Ch'an traveller Ch'uan asked, "Where do they fall?" the Layman immediately slapped him. Since Ch'uan was unable to carry out the order, the Layman ordered him to carry out half. Although the order was put into effect, when Ch'an traveller Ch'uan responded in this way, it was not that he didn't know what P'ang was getting at. They each had a point to their activity, but their rolling up and rolling out were not the same. Even so, in some respects he didn't come up to the Layman. That is why he fell into his trap and found it difficult to get out of the Layman's range.

After the Layman had hit him, the Layman went on to explain the reason to him saying, "Your eyes see like a blind man, your mouth speaks like a mute." Besides the previous words Hsueh Tou said, "When he first spoke I just would have made a snowball and hit him with it." Hsueh Tou talked this way, not wanting to turn his back on the question: it's just that his action was tardy. Librarian Ch'ing said, "The Layman's mind is like a lightning bolt. If we waited for you to grab a snowball, how long would it take? Only if you hit him while he's still speaking can you cut him off completely."

Hsueh Tou versifies his own hitting and says:

## VERSE

*The snowball hits! The snowball hits!*

What will he do about falling into a secondary action? It's not worth the trouble to bring it forth. Overhead vastness, underfoot vastness.

*Old Pang's ability cannot grasp it.*

Again and again there are people who don't know this. I only fear it's not so.

*Gods and humans do not know for themselves:*

What scene is this? Does Hsueh Tou know?

*In eyes, in ears, absolutely clean.*

The arrowpoints meet. Your eyes see like a blind man, your mouth speaks like a mute.

*Absolutely clean—*

How? Where will you see Layman P'ang and Hsueh Tou?

*Even the blue-eyed barbarian monk Bodhidharma would find it hard to discriminate.*

Bodhidharma comes forth: what does he say to you? I'll hit saying, "What are you saying?" They're buried in the same pit.

## COMMENTARY

"The snowball hits! The snowball hits! / Old P'ang's ability cannot grasp it." Hsueh Tou wanted to walk on the Layman's head. The Ancients used "snow" to illustrate the matter of Uniformity. Hsueh Tou meant: "If at that time I had made a snowball and hit him with it, no matter what abilities the Layman had, it would have been hard for him to reach (me.)" Hsueh Tou praises his own hitting, far from knowing where he's lost his profit.

"Gods and men do not know for themselves: / In eyes, in ears, absolutely clean." In the eyes is snow, in the ears is snow too—just at that moment they are dwelling in Uniformity. This is also called "the realm of Samantabhadra." The phenomenon of Uniformity is also called "becoming solid."

Yun Men said, "Even 'having not the slightest worry in the world' is still a turning phrase." When you don't see a single form, this finally is half the issue. If you want the whole issue, first you must know that there is a single road going beyond; when you get here your great function must become manifest (with no gap) for even a needle to enter, and you don't accept the judgments of other people.

Thus it was said, "He studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase." An Ancient said, "An appropriate statement is a stake at which to tether a donkey for ten thousand eons." What's the use?

When he gets to this point Hsueh Tou has finished the verse. But he turns around again and says, "But this cleanness is absolute—even Bodhidharma would find it hard to discriminate." Since even Bodhidharma finds it hard to discern, what more would you have me say?

# Tung Shan's No Cold or Heat

## POINTER

Ten thousand ages abide by the phrase that determines heaven and earth. Even the thousand sages cannot judge the ability to capture tigers and rhinos. Without any further traces of obstruction, the whole being appears everywhere equally.

If you want to understand the hammer and tongs of transcendence, you need the forge and bellows of an adept.

But say, since ancient times has there ever been such a family style or not? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Tung Shan, "When cold and heat come, how can we avoid them?"<sup>1</sup>

Shan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?"<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?"<sup>3</sup>

Tung Shan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. It's not this season. (Cold and heat) are right in your face, right on your head. Where are you?
2. The world's people can't find it. He hides his body but reveals a shadow. A con man sells a bogus city of silver.
3. Tung Shan swindles everyone utterly. The monk turns around following him. As soon as Tung Shan lets down his hook the monk climbs onto it.
4. The real does not conceal the false, the crooked does not hide the straight. Looking out over the cliff he sees tigers and rhinos—this

is indeed an occasion to be sad. Tung Shan overturns the great ocean and kicks over Mt. Sumeru. But say, where is Tung Shan?

# COMMENTARY

Master Hsin of Huang Lung picked this out and said, "Tung Shan puts the collar on the sleeve and cuts off the shirtfront under the armpits. But what could he do?—This monk didn't like it." Right then a monk came forward and asked Huang Lung, "How are they to be dealt with?" After a long silence Huang Lung said, "Peaceful meditation does not require mountains and rivers: when you have extinguished the mind, fire itself is cool."

Tell me all of you, where is Tung Shan's trap at? If you can clearly discern this, for the first time you will know how the five positions of the Tung Shan tradition of interchanging correct and biased<sup>a</sup> handle people in an extraordinary way. When you reach this transcendental realm, then you'll be able to be like this without needing any arrangements, and you'll spontaneously accord perfectly.

Thus it is said:

*The biased within the correct:*

*In the middle of the first night, before the moon  
shines,*

*No wonder, when they meet, they don't recognize  
each other:*

*Each is hidden, still embracing the aversion of  
former days.*

*The correct within the biased:*

*At dawn an old woman encounters an ancient mir-  
ror;*

*Clearly she sees her face—there is no other reality.  
Don't go on mistaking the image for the head.*

*Coming from within the correct:*

*Within nothingness there's a road out of the dust.  
If you can just avoid violating the present taboo  
name,*

*You'll still surpass the eloquent ones of former  
dynasties who silenced every tongue.*

*Arrival within the biased:*

*When two swords cross points, there's no need to withdraw.*

*A good hand is like a lotus in fire—*

*Clearly he naturally has the energy to reach the heavens.*

*Arrival within both at once:*

*He does not fall into being or non-being—who dares to associate with him?*

*Everyone wants to get out of the ordinary flow,*

*But after all he returns and sits in the ashes.*

Jurist Yuan of Fu Shan considers this case as being in the pattern of the five positions. If you understand one, then the rest are naturally easy to understand. Yen T'ou said, "It's like a gourd (floating) on the water: push it, and it rolls over without making any effort at all."

Once there was a monk who asked Tung Shan, "How is it when Manjusri and Samantabhadra come to call?" Shan said, "I'd drive them into a herd of water buffalo." The monk said, "Teacher, you enter hell fast as an arrow." Shan said, "I've got all their strength."

When Tung Shan said, "Why don't you go to the place where there is no cold or heat?" this was the correct within the biased. When the monk said, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?" and Shan said, "When it's cold the cold kills you; when it's hot the heat kills you," this was the biased within the correct. Though it's correct, still it's biased; though it's biased, nevertheless it's complete. This is recorded in full detail in the Records of the Ts'ao Tung School. Had it been the Lin Chi tradition, there wouldn't have been so many things. With this kind of public case you must understand directly as soon as it is uttered.

Some say, "I like no cold no heat very much." What grasp do they have on the case? An Ancient said, "If you run on a sword's edge, you're fast. If you see with emotional consciousness, then you're slow."

Haven't you heard: A monk asked Ts'ui Wei, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?" Wei said, "When no one comes, I'll tell you," then went into the garden. The monk said, "There's no one right here: please, Teacher, tell me." Wei pointed to the bamboo and said, "This stalk is so

tall, that stalk is so short." Suddenly the monk was greatly enlightened.

Again: Ts'ao Shan asked a monk, "When it's so hot, where will you go to avoid it?" The monk said, "I'll avoid it inside a boiling cauldron, within the coals of a furnace." Ts'ao Shan said, "How can it be avoided in a boiling cauldron or among the coals of a furnace?" The monk said, "The multitude of sufferings cannot reach there." See how the people of the Ts'ao Tung house naturally understood the conversation of people of their house.

Hsueh Tou uses the affairs of their house to produce his verse:

#### VERSE

*He lets down his hand, but still it's the same as a ten  
thousand fathom cliff:*

Who can discern this without being an adept? Where are correct and biased not perfectly merged? Once the imperial edict is on its way the nobles get out of the road (to let it pass).

*Why must correct and biased be in an arrangement?*

If you do arrange them, where will you have Today? How will you not become involved in dualism? When the wind moves, the grasses bend down; where the water runs, streams form.

*The ancient crystal palace reflects the bright moon,*

Round and full. Just don't grasp the reflection, and don't run right in.

*The sly hound of Han vainly runs up the stairs.*

It isn't just this time. He's stumbled past. Why is he running after dirt? I'll hit and say you are a fellow student of this monk.

#### COMMENTARY

In the Ts'ao Tung tradition there is appearing in the world and not appearing in the world; there is letting down a hand and not letting down a hand. If you don't appear in the world, your

eyes gaze at cloudy skies. If you appear in the world, then your head and face are covered with ashes and dirt.

"Eyes gazing at cloudy skies" is "on top of a ten thousand fathom peak." "Head and face covered with ashes and dirt" refers to the business of letting down a hand. Sometimes "head and face covered with ashes and dirt" is "on top of a ten thousand fathom peak." Sometimes "on top of a ten thousand fathom peak" is "head and faces covered with ashes and dirt." In reality, going into inhabited areas to let down a hand and standing alone on a solitary peak are the same. Having returned to the source and comprehended nature, it is no different from discriminating intelligence. You must avoid understanding them as two parts.

Thus Hsueh Tou said, "He lets down his hand, but still it's the same as a ten thousand fathom cliff." There's simply no place for you to approach. "Why must correct and biased be in an arrangement?" When it comes time to function, they are naturally like this, they are not in any arrangement. This praises Tung Shan's answer.

Afterwards he said, "The ancient crystal palace reflects the bright moon / The sly hound of Han vainly runs up the stairs." This just versifies this monk running after Tung Shan's words. In the Ts'ao Tung tradition they have "the stone woman," "the wooden horse," "the bottomless basket," "the pearl that shines (of itself) at night," "the dead snake," and so on, eighteen kinds. Their general purpose is to illustrate the position of the correct.

When Tung Shan answered, "Why not go to where there is no cold or heat?" this was like the moon shining in the ancient crystal palace, seeming to have a round reflection. The monk asked, "What is the place where there is no cold or heat?" This is just like the hound of Han chasing a clod of dirt: he runs frantically up the stairs to catch the moon's reflection. Tung Shan said, "When it's cold, the cold kills you; when it's hot, the heat kills you." This monk was like the hound of Han running up the stairs but not seeing the image of the moon.

"The hound of Han" comes out of *Essays on the Warring States* where it says, "He was a swift black dog belonging to the Han clan. The rabbits in the mountains were clever; only he could catch these rabbits." Hsueh Tou draws on this to make a comparison for this monk.



What about all of you—do you know where Tung Shan helped people?

After a long silence, Yuan Wu said, "What rabbits are you looking for?"

TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. 'Correct' symbolizes emptiness, nirvana; 'biased' symbolizes matter-energy, samsara. The intrinsic identity of emptiness and matter-energy, nirvana and samsara, and hence the complementary unity of wisdom and compassion, is basic to Mahayana, or Great Vehicle Buddhism.

# Ho Shan's Knowing How to Beat the Drum

## CASE

Ho Shan imparted some words saying, "Cultivating study is called 'learning.' Cutting off study is called 'nearness.'<sup>1</sup> Going beyond these two is to be considered real going beyond."<sup>2</sup>

A monk came forward and asked, "What is 'real going beyond?'"<sup>3</sup> Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."<sup>4</sup>

Again he asked, "What is the real truth?"<sup>5</sup> Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."<sup>6</sup>

Again he asked, "'Mind is Buddha'—I'm not asking about this. What is not mind and not Buddha?"<sup>7</sup> Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."<sup>8</sup>

Again he asked, "When a transcendent man comes, how do you receive him?"<sup>9</sup> Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum."<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. The world's patchrobed monks can't leap clear of this. An iron hammerhead with no handle hole. An iron spike.
2. What are you doing with the one eye on your forehead?
3. What is he saying? I'd blot it out with a single brush stroke. There's an iron spike.
4. An iron spike. Iron brambles. Hard, hard.
5. What is he saying? A doubled case. There's another iron spike.
6. An iron spike. Iron brambles. Hard, hard.
7. What is he saying? This garbage heap! The three sections are not the same. There's another iron spike.
8. An iron spike. Iron brambles. Hard, hard.
9. What is he saying? This monk encounters a fourth ladleful of his foul water. There's another iron spike.
10. An iron spike. Iron brambles. Hard, hard. But say, what does this really mean? In the morning he goes to India, in the evening he returns to China.

## COMMENTARY

Ho Shan imparted some words saying, "Cultivating study is called 'learning.' Cutting off study is called 'nearness.' Going beyond these two is to be considered real going beyond." The words of this case come from the *Jewel Treasure Treatise*. To study till there is nothing to study is called "cutting off study." Thus it is said, "Shallow learning, deep enlightenment; deep learning, no enlightenment." This is called "cutting off study." Yung Chia, who was enlightened in one night at Ts'ao Ch'i, said, "Years ago I accumulated learning, consulted the commentaries, and searched scriptures and treatises. Once one's cultivation of studies is completed and exhausted, he is called a non-doing, free man of the Path, beyond study. When he reaches the point of cutting off study, only then for the first time is he near to the Path. When he manages to go beyond these two (aspects of) study, this is called 'real going beyond.'"

The monk too was undeniably bright and quick, so he picked up on these words to question Ho Shan. Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum." This is what is called flavorless words, flavorless speech. If you want to understand this case, you must be a transcendent man. Only then will you see that these words have nothing to do with inherent nature, nor is there anything about them to discuss. Understand directly like the bottom falling out of a bucket: only this is where a patchrobed monk rests easy and begins to be able to accord with the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West. Thus Yun Men said, "Hsueh Feng's rolling a ball, Ho Shan's beating the drum, the National Teacher's bowl of water, Chao Chou's 'Drink some tea,'—all these are indications of the absolute."

Again the monk asked, "What is the real truth?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum." In the real truth not one other thing is set up. As for the worldly truth, the myriad things are all present. That there is no duality to real and conventional is the highest meaning of the holy truths.

Again the monk asked, "'Mind is Buddha'—I'm not asking about this. What is not mind and not Buddha?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat the drum." "What's mind is Buddha" is easy to seek. But when you get to that which is not mind and not Buddha, it's hard and there are few people who arrive.

Again the monk asked, "When a transcendent man comes, how do you receive him?" Shan said, "Knowing how to beat

the drum." A transcendent man is a man who has passed through, who is free, purified, and at ease.

All over they consider these four phases as a message from the source: they are called Ho Shan's four beating the drums. This is just like the following:

A monk asked Ching Ch'ing, "At the beginning of a new year, is there any Buddha Dharma or not?" Ch'ing said, "There is." The monk said, "What is the Buddha Dharma at the beginning of a new year?" Ch'ing said, "Initiate good fortune on new year's day and the myriad things are all renewed." The monk said, "I thank the Master for the answer." Ch'ing said, "Today I lost the advantage." He had six kinds of losses like this answer.

Again: A monk asked the great teacher Ching Kuo, "How is it when a crane perches upon a lone pine?" Kuo said, "Beneath its feet, an embarrassing situation." He also asked, "How is it when snow covers the thousand mountains?" Kuo said, "After the sun comes out, an embarrassing situation." Again the monk asked, "Where did the spirits who protect the Teaching go during the purge of 845?" Kuo said, "For the two guardians outside the triple gate, an embarrassing situation." All over, these are called Ching Kuo's three embarrassments.

Again: Pao Fu asked a monk, "What Buddha is the one in the temple?" The monk said, "Try to decide for sure, Teacher." Fu said, "It's old Shakyamuni." The monk said, "Better not deceive people." Fu said, "On the contrary, it's you who are deceiving me." Fu also asked the monk, "What's your name?" The monk said, "Hsien Tse." (which means "all wet") Fu said, "How is it when you encounter withering dryness?" The monk said, "Who is the withering dry one?" Fu said, "I am." The monk said, "Better not deceive people, Teacher." Fu said, "On the contrary, it's you who are deceiving me." Again Fu asked the monk, "What work do you do that you eat till you're so big?" The monk said, "You're not so small yourself, Teacher." Fu made a crouching gesture. The monk said, "Better not deceive people, Teacher." Fu said, "On the contrary, it's you who are deceiving me." Fu also asked the bath keeper, "How wide is that cauldron (you heat the water in)?" The bath keeper aid, "Please, Teacher, measure and see." Fu went through the motions of measuring. The bath keeper said, "Better not deceive people, Teacher." Fu said, "On the contrary, it's you who are deceiving me." All over they call this Pao Fu's four deceptions of people.

This main case is also like Hsueh Feng's four tubs of lacquer:<sup>a</sup> all were masters of our ancient sect. Each produces profound and marvelous teachings and devices to receive people.

Afterwords Hsueh Tou draws out a single continuous line based on Yun Men's teachings to his assembly, and versifies this public case.

# VERSE

*One hauls rock;*

In the heart of the realm the emperor commands. A leper drags along his companions. A transcendent man comes this way.

*A second moves earth.*

Outside the passes the general gives orders. Both have their crimes covered by the same indictment. Those with the same disease sympathize with each other.

*To shoot the bolt requires a ten-ton crossbow.*

Even if it's got a ten-ton pull, it still won't be able to penetrate. It should not be used against light opposition; how could it be used for a dead frog?

*The old master of Elephant Bone Cliff (Hsueh Feng) rolled balls—*

There's another man who has come this way. He had an iron hammer head with no handle hole. Who doesn't know?

*How could this equal Ho Shan's "Knowing how to beat the drum"?*

An iron spike. It takes this old fellow to understand. One son has attained intimately.

*I report for you to know:*

Even Hsueh Tou hasn't seen it in dreams. He's adding frost on top of snow. Do you know?

*Don't be careless!*

Again there's a bit of utter confusion.

*The sweet is sweet, the bitter is bitter.*

Thanks for the answer. Hsueh Tou wrongly adds a footnote: he should be given thirty blows. Has he ever taken a beating? As before, dark vastness. I'll hit!

## COMMENTARY

One day Kuei Tsung gave the general call to labor (summoning everyone) to haul rock. Tsung asked the Duty Distributor where he was going. The Duty Distributor said, "I'm going to haul rock." Tsung said, "For now I'll let you haul rock, but don't move the tree in the middle."

Whenever a newcomer arrived (at his place) Mu P'ing would first order him to move three loads of earth. Mu P'ing had a verse which he showed to his assembly saying:

*East Mountain Road is narrow, West Mountain is  
low:*

*New comers must not refuse three loads of mud.  
Alas, you've been traversing the roads so long,  
It's so clear, but you don't recognize it and instead  
get lost.*

Later there was a monk who asked Mu P'ing, "I don't ask about what is included in the three loads. What about what's outside the three loads?" P'ing said, "The Iron Wheel Emperor commands in his realm." The monk was speechless, so P'ing hit him.

This is why Hsueh Tou said, "One hauls rock / A second moves earth."

"To shoot the bolt requires a ten-ton crossbow." Hsueh Tou uses the ten-ton pull crossbow to explain this case: he wants you to see how Ho Shan helped people. If it's a monstrous dragon or tiger or some other fierce beast, then you use this crossbow. If it's a tiny bird or a creature of little consequence, of course you mustn't use the crossbow lightly. Hence a ten-ton crossbow does not shoot its bolt for a rat.

"The old master of Elephant Bone Cliff rolled balls." That is: one day Hsueh Feng saw Hsuan Sha coming and rolled out three wooden balls together. Hsuan Sha made a smashing gesture. Hsueh Feng profoundly approved of him.

Although all of these stories are instances of the great functioning of their entire capacities, none equal's Ho Shan's "Knowing how to beat the drum." How direct this is—but it's hard to understand. Thus Hsueh Tou said, "How could this equal Ho Shan's 'Knowing how to beat the drum?'"

Again he feared that people would just make their living on the words without knowing their source, (and thus be) careless.

Therefore he said, "I report for you to know: don't be careless!" You too must really get to this realm before you can understand. If you don't want to carelessly confuse things, "The sweet is sweet, the bitter is bitter." Though Hsueh Tou picked it up and played with it like this, in the end he can't leap clear of Ho Shan either.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "Hsueh Feng's four tubs of lacquer" refers to some incidents between Hsueh Feng and T'ou Tzu, recorded in the *Record of the Transmission of the Lamp*:

Hsueh Feng was attending on T'ou Tzu, who pointed to a piece of rock in front of his hut and said to Hsueh Feng, "All the Buddhas of past, present, and future are right here." Feng said, "One must know that there is one who is not here." T'ou Tzu then returned to his hut to sit, saying, "You dull tub of lacquer!"

Feng followed T'ou Tzu to call on the hermit of Lung Yen. Feng asked, "Where does the road of Lung Yen go to?" T'ou Tzu took his staff and pointed before them. Feng said, "Does it go east or go west?" T'ou Tzu said, "You tub of lacquer!"

Another day Feng asked, "How is it when 'immediately completed with a single stroke'?" T'ou Tzu said, "It's not some-one of unsettled temperament." Feng said, "How is it when not using a single stroke?" T'ou Tzu said, "You tub of lacquer!"

One day when T'ou Tzu was in his hut sitting, Feng asked, "Master, is there anyone who comes here to study or not?" T'ou Tzu took a hoe from under his bed and threw it down in front of him. Feng said, "If so, then I'll dig right here." T'ou Tzu said, "This tub of lacquer is not quick."

# Chao Chou's Seven-Pound Cloth Shirt

## POINTER

When he must speak, he speaks—in the whole world there is no match for him. When he should act, he acts—his whole capacity doesn't defer (to anyone). He is like sparks struck from stone, like the brilliance of a flash of lightning, like a raging fire fanned by the wind, like a rushing torrent crossing a sword edge. When he lifts up the hammer and tongs of transcendence, you won't avoid losing your point and having your tongue tied.

He lets out a single continuous road. To test I'm citing it: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "The myriad things return to one. Where does the one return to?"<sup>1</sup>

Chou said, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt. It weighed seven pounds."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. He's pressing this old fellow. Piled in mountains, heaped up in ranges. He should avoid going to the ghost cave to make his living.
2. After all Chou goes in all directions, drawing a net that fills the sky. But do you see Chao Chou? He has picked up the nostrils of patchrobed monks.

## COMMENTARY

If you understand "going immediately at one stroke," then you've pierced the nostrils of the world's old teachers all at



once, and they can't do a thing about you. Naturally where water goes, a channel forms. But if you vacillate and hesitate, the old monk Chao Chou is under your feet. The essential point of the Buddhist Teaching is not a matter of many words or verbose speech.

A monk asked Chao Chou, "The myriad things return to one. Where does the one return to?" Yet Chou answered him saying, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt; it weighed seven pounds." If you go to the words to discriminate you are mistakenly abiding by the zero point of a scale. If you don't go to the words to discriminate, what can you do about it that he did nevertheless speak this way? This case, though hard to see, is nevertheless easy to understand; though easy to understand, it's still hard to see. Insofar as it's hard, it's a silver mountain, an iron wall. Insofar as it's easy, you are directly aware. There's no place for your calculations of right and wrong.

This story is the same kind as the story of P'u Hua saying, "Tomorrow there's a feast at the Temple of Great Compassion."<sup>a</sup>

One day a monk asked Chao Chou, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch coming from the West?" Chou said, "The cypress tree in the garden." The monk said, "Don't use objects to teach people with, Teacher." Chou said, "I've never used objects to teach people." Observe how, at the ultimate point, where it is impossible to turn, he does turn, and spontaneously covers heaven and earth. If you can't turn, wherever you set foot on the road you get stuck.

But say, did Chao Chou ever have discussions of Buddhist doctrine or not? If you say he did, when has he ever spoken of mind or of nature, of mysteries or of marvels? If you say he didn't have the source meaning of the Buddhist Teaching, when has he ever turned his back on anyone's question?

Haven't you heard: a monk asked Mu P'ing, "What is the great meaning of the Buddhist Teaching?" P'ing said, "This winter melon is so big." Again: a monk asked an ancient worthy, "Deep in the mountains on an overhanging cliff, in a remote, inaccessible, uninhabited place, is there any Buddhist Teaching or not?" The ancient worthy said, "There is." The monk said, "What is the Buddhist Teaching deep within the mountains?" The ancient worthy said, "The large rocks are large, the small ones small."

When you look at such a case, where are the obscurities? Hsueh Tou knows what they come down to: thus he opens up a road of meaning and comes out with a verse for you:

# VERSE

*He wraps everything up and presses against the ancient old awl.*

What's the need to press this old fellow? They push and push back—to where?

*How many people know the weight of the seven-pound shirt!*  
To bring it out again is not worth half a cent. All I can do is frown. Still, Chou has done the monk one better.

*Right now I throw it down into West Lake;*  
Only with the ability of Hsueh Tou could this be done. I don't want it either.

*The pure wind of unburdening—to whom should it be imparted?*

From the past through the present. Tell me, is Hsueh Tou harmonizing with Chao Chou, or is he putting down footnotes for him? One son attains intimately.

# COMMENTARY

Of Fen Yang's eighteen kinds of questions, this one in the Case is called a "wrapping-up question." Hsueh Tou says, "He wraps everything up and presses against the ancient old awl." He wraps up everything and makes it return to unity.

This monk wanted to press Chao Chou, but Chou too was an adept. Where it was impossible to turn, he had a way to show himself: daring to open his big mouth he immediately said, "When I was in Ch'ing Chou I made a cloth shirt that weighed seven pounds." Hsueh Tou says, "How many people can there be who know the weight of this seven-pound shirt?"

"Right now I throw it down into West Lake." Myriad things return to one, but he doesn't even need the one. Since he doesn't need the seven-pound cloth shirt either, all at once he

throws it down into West Lake. When Hsueh Tou dwelt on Tung T'ing's green peak, there was a West Lake (nearby).

"The pure wind of unburdening—to whom should it be imparted?" This refers to Chao Chou teaching his assembly, saying, "If you're coming north I'll load up for you. If you're coming south I'll unload for you. Even if you're coming from Hsueh Feng or Yun Chu, you're still a fellow carrying a board." Hsueh Tou says, "To whom should a pure wind like this be imparted?" "Loading up" means speaking for you of mind and nature, of mysteries and marvels—all sorts of expedient methods. If it's unloaded, there are no longer so many meanings and hidden wonders.

Some people carried a load of Ch'an to Chao Chou's place, but when they got there they couldn't make use of it at all. He would set them straight all at once, making them free and easy, without the slightest concern. We say of this, "After awakening it's the same as before awakening."

People these days all make unconcern an understanding. Some say, "There is no delusion or enlightenment: it's not necessary to go on seeking. Even before the Buddha appeared in the world, before Bodhidharma ever came to this country, it could not have been otherwise. What's the use of the Buddha appearing in the world? What did the Patriarch still come from the West for?" All such views—what relevance do they have? You must have greatly penetrated and greatly awakened: then as before, mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, in fact all the myriad things are perfectly manifest. Then for the first time you can be an unconcerned person.

Haven't you heard Lung Ya say:

*To study the Path, first you must have a basis of  
enlightenment:*

*It's like having vied in a boat race:*

*Though you relax on idle ground as before,*

*Only having won can you rest.*

As for this story of Chao Chou's seven-pound cloth shirt, look how this man of old talks this way, like gold and jade. Me talking like this, you listening like this—all of this is "loading up." But say, what is unloading? Go back to your places and look into this.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The story is told as follows in the *Ch'uan Teng Lun* 10:

When (his master) P'an Shan died, P'u Hua carried on his teaching in the north, sometimes in city markets, sometimes in isolated villages. He would ring his bell and say, "I hit whether you're coming from light or coming from darkness."

One day Lin Chi sent a monk to catch him by saying, "How is it when neither light nor dark?" P'u Hua answered, "Tomorrow there's a feast at the Temple of Great Compassion."

# Ching Ch'ing's Sound of Raindrops

## POINTER

With a single stroke he completes it and passes beyond ordinary and holy. His slightest word can break things up, untying what is bound and releasing what is stuck. As if walking on thin ice or running over sword blades, he sits within the heaps of sound and form, he walks on top of sound and form.

For the moment I leave aside wondrous functioning in all directions. How is it when he leaves that very instant? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Ching Ch'ing asked a monk, "What sound is that outside the gate?"<sup>1</sup> The monk said, "The sound of raindrops."<sup>2</sup>

Ch'ing said, "Sentient beings are inverted. They lose themselves and follow after things."<sup>3</sup>

The monk said, "What about you, Teacher?"<sup>4</sup>

Ch'ing said, "I almost don't lose myself."<sup>5</sup>

The monk said, "What is the meaning of 'I almost don't lose myself'?"<sup>6</sup>

Ch'ing said, "Though it still should be easy to express oneself, to say the whole thing has to be difficult."<sup>7</sup>

## NOTES

1. He casually lets down a hook. He doesn't suffer from deafness: what is he asking?
2. He's undeniably truthful. It's good news too.
3. A concern is born. Ch'ing is used to getting his way. He rakes the monk in. He depends on his own abilities.
4. As it turns out the monk suffers a defeat. He's turned the spear around: inevitably it will be hard for Ch'ing to stand up to it.

Instead (of Ch'ing, the monk) grabs the spear and stabs the man back.

5. Bah! He just can't explain.
6. He presses this old fellow and crushes the man. His first arrow was still light, the second arrow was deep.
7. Provisions to nourish a son. Although it's like this, where have Te Shan and Lin Chi gone? If he doesn't call it the sound of raindrops, what sound should he call it? It simply can't be explained.

### COMMENTARY

You too should understand right here. When the Ancients imparted their teaching, with one device, one object, they wanted to guide people. One day Ching Ch'ing asked a monk, "What is that sound outside the gate?" The monk said, "The sound of quail." Ch'ing said, "If you wish to avoid uninterrupted hell, don't slander the Wheel of the True Dharma of the Tathagata." Another time Ch'ing asked, "What is that sound outside the gate?" A monk said, "The sound of a snake eating a frog." Ch'ing said, "I knew that sentient beings suffer: here is another suffering sentient being." These words are the same as the Case. If patchrobed monks can penetrate here, nothing can block their independence within the heaps of sound and form. If you can't penetrate then you are constrained by sound and form.

In various places they call this "tempering words." If it were tempering, it would only amount to mental activity. (Those with this view) do not see where the ancient man Ching Ch'ing helped people. (Ch'ing's words in the Case) are also called "penetrating sound and form," "explaining the eye of the Path," "explaining sound and form," "explaining the mind source," "explaining forgetting feelings," "explaining preaching." Though (such interpretations) are undeniably detailed, nevertheless they still are stuck in clichés.

When Ch'ing asked this way, "What is that sound outside the gate?" the monk said, "The sound of raindrops." But then Ch'ing said, "Sentient beings are inverted. They lose themselves and follow after things." People all misunderstand and call this intentionally upsetting the man, but this has nothing to do with it. How little they realize that Ch'ing has the skill to

help people. Ch'ing is so brave he isn't bound by a single device and a single object. Above all he doesn't spare his eyebrows.

How could Ching Ch'ing not have known that it was the sound of raindrops? Why was it still worth asking? You must realize that the Ancient was using his probing pole and reed shade (to see into the depths) to examine this monk. The monk too pressed back well, immediately saying, "What about you, Teacher?" What happened then was that Ching Ch'ing went into the mud and water to say to him, "I almost don't lose myself." The reason (for saying this) was that the monk was losing himself, pursuing things. Why did Ching Ch'ing lose himself too? You must realize that Ch'ing had a place to get out himself within the phrase he used to test the monk.

This monk was very dull—he wanted to beat this statement into the ground, so he asked, "What is the meaning of 'I almost don't lose myself'?" If it had been the school of Te Shan or Lin Chi the blows and shouts would already have been falling. But Ching Ch'ing put through a single continuous path and followed him creating complications: he went on to say more to him, "Though it still should be easy to express oneself, to say the whole thing has to be difficult." Nevertheless, as an Ancient said, "Continuity is indeed very difficult." Ching Ch'ing illuminated for this monk the great affair under his feet.

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

#### VERSE

*An empty hall, the sound of raindrops. . .*

Never ever interrupted. Everyone is here.

*Hard to respond, even for an adept.*

Of course he doesn't know how. I have never been an adept. There's provisional and real, there's letting go and gathering in, there's killing and bringing to life, there's catching and releasing.

*If you say he's ever let the streams enter,*

You stick your head into a bowl of glue. If you don't call it the sound of raindrops, what sound will you call it?

*As before you still don't understand.*

How often I've asked you! You tubs of lacquer! Give me back my holeless iron hammer.

*Understanding or not understanding—*

Cut off the two ends. The two are not separate. It's not on these two sides.

*On South Mountain, on North Mountain, more and more downpour.*

Above our heads and under our feet. If you call it the sound of raindrops, you're blind. If you don't call it the sound of raindrops, what sound will you call it? Your feet must be treading the ground of reality before you can get here.

#### COMMENTARY

"An empty hall, the sound of raindrops / Hard to respond, even for an adept." If you call it the sound of raindrops, then this is "losing oneself, following after things." If you don't call it the sound of raindrops, then how will you turn things around? At this point even if you're an adept, it's still hard to respond. Therefore an Ancient said, "If your view equals your teacher's, you have less than half the teacher's merit. Only if your view goes beyond your teacher's are you fit to receive and carry on the transmission." And as Nan Yuan said, "With acceptance of birthlessness under the cudgel, he faces situations without deferring to a teacher."

"If you say he ever let the streams enter, / As before you still don't understand." In the *Surangama Sutra* it says, "First, in the midst of hearing, (Avalokitesvara) let the streams enter, but was mindless of what was there. Since what he let in was quiescent, the two forms, motion and stillness, were ultimately not produced." If you say it's the sound of raindrops, it's not right, and if you say it's not the sound of raindrops, it's not right either. If you say he lets the streams of sound and form enter, that's not right either. If you call it sound and form, as before you don't understand his meaning. It is compared to pointing at the moon with one's finger: the moon is not the finger.

Understanding and not understanding, "On South Mountain, on North Mountain, more and more downpour."



# Yun Men's Six Do Not Take It In

## POINTER

What does the sky say? The four seasons go on there. What does the earth say? The myriad things are born there. Where the four seasons go on, he can see the essence; where the myriad things are born, he can see the action.

But say, where can you see a patchrobed monk? Having abandoned words and speech and active functioning, having blocked off your throat when walking, standing, sitting, and lying down—can you still discern him?

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "What is the Body of Reality?"<sup>1a</sup> Men said, "Six do not take it in."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. So many people have doubts about this. The thousand sages can't leap out of it. He's indulged quite a bit.
2. He cuts nails and shears through iron. "An eight-corner mortar flies through the air." The spirit tortoise is dragging his tail.

## COMMENTARY

Yun Men said, "Six do not take it in." This is indeed hard to understand: even if you reach it before the first indications are distinct, this is already the secondary. If you understand after the first indications arise, then you've fallen into the tertiary. If you go to the words and phrases to discern (his meaning), you will search without ever being able to find it.

But ultimately, what do you take as the Body of Reality? Those who are adepts immediately get up and go as soon as

they hear it raised. If on the other hand you linger in thought and hold back your potential, you should listen humbly to this treatment.

The senior monk Fu of T'ai Yuan was originally a lecturer. One day when he had gone up to his seat to lecture, he spoke of the Body of Reality saying, "Vertically it reaches through the three times, and horizontally it extends through the ten directions." There was a Ch'an traveller in the audience who let out a laugh as he heard this. Fu came down from his seat and said, "What was my shortcoming just now? Please, Ch'an man, explain so I can see." The Ch'an man said, "Lecturer, you only lecture on that which pertains to the extent of the Body of Reality—you don't see the Body of Reality." Fu said, "After all, what would be right?" The Ch'an man said, "You should temporarily stop lecturing and sit in a quiet room. You have to see it for yourself."

Fu did as he said and sat quietly all night. Suddenly he heard them hitting the bell for the fifth watch: suddenly he was greatly enlightened. So he went and knocked on the Ch'an man's door saying, "I've understood." The Ch'an man said, "Try to say something so I can see." Fu said, "From today onwards I'll no longer twist these nostrils born of my parents."

Again: in the scriptures it says, "The Buddha's true Body of Reality is like empty space. It manifests shapes in response to things like the moon (reflected) in the water."

Again: a monk asked Chia Shan, "What is the Body of Reality?" Shan said, "The Body of Reality has no form." The monk asked, "What is the Eye of Reality?" Shan said, "The Eye of Reality has no flaws."

Yun Men said, "Six do not take it in." Some say of this case, "This is just the six sense-organs, the six sense-objects, the six consciousnesses. These sixes all arise from the Body of Reality, so the six faculties cannot take it in." Intellectual interpretations such as this, though, are irrelevant. Moreover, they drag down Yun Men. If you want to see, then see: there's no place for your attempts to rationalize. Haven't you seen how it says in the scripture: "This Truth is not something that calculating thought and discrimination can understand."

Yun Men's answers have often provoked people's intellectual interpretations. Thus in every phrase of Yun Men's there are inevitably three phrases present. Nor does he turn his back

on your questions: responding to the time, adapting to the season, with one word, one phrase, one dot, one line, he indeed has a place to show himself. Thus it is said, "When a single phrase is penetrated, a thousand phrases, ten thousand phrases, are penetrated all at once."

But say, is "Six do not take it in" the Body of Reality? Is it the Patriarchs? I give you thirty blows!

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

#### VERSE

*One, two, three, four, five, six—*

Go all the way through, then start again at the beginning.  
For every drop of water, a drop of ice. Why expend so much effort?

*The blue-eyed barbarian monk can't count up to it.*

Past, present, and future lives for sixty eons. Have you ever seen Bodhidharma even in a dream? Why do you deliberately transgress?

*Shao Lin deceptively said he passed it on to Shen Kuang—*

When one man transmits a falsehood, ten thousand transmit it as truth. From the start it was already wrong.

*He rolled up his robe and said he was returning to India.*

He utterly swindled ordinary people. How embarrassing!

*India is vast, there's no place to look for him—*

Where is he? This at last is the Great Peace. Right now, where is he?

*He comes back by night to stay here at Ju Peak.*

He pokes out your eyes. Still, he's raising waves where there's no wind. But say, is it the Body of Reality or the Body of Buddha? I'll give you thirty blows!

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou is well able to show his eye where there is no seam or crack and come out with a verse to make people see. Yun Men said, "Six do not take it in." Why does Hsueh Tou

nonetheless say, "One, two, three, four, five, six"? In fact not even the blue-eyed barbarian monk can count up to it. That is why it is said, "I just allow that the old barbarian knows—I don't allow that he understands." Only a descendant of Yun Men's house (like Hsueh Tou) could do this. I just said that Yun Men responds to the time and adapts to the season with one word, one phrase. Only if you can penetrate through will you know that the Path is not a matter of words and phrases. But if you're not yet this way, you won't avoid making up intellectual interpretations.

My late master Wu Tsu said, "Shakyamuni Buddha was a lowdown hired worker. The cypress trees in the garden: one, two, three, four, five." If you can manage truly to see under Yun Men's words, you'll reach this realm instantly.

"Shao Lin deceptively said he passed it on to Shen Kuang." The Second Patriarch's initial name was Shen Kuang. Later he said that Bodhidharma had returned to India. Bodhidharma had been buried at the foot of Bear Ears Mountain. At that time the (Liu) Sung emissary Yun Feng was returning from the West. In the Western Mountains he saw Bodhidharma carrying one shoe in his hand going back to India. The emissary returned and reported this to the Emperor. When Bodhidharma's tomb was opened they only saw a single shoe left behind.

Hsueh Tou says, "How can this matter really be imparted?" Since there was no imparting it, Bodhidharma rolled up his robe and said he was returning to India. But then tell me, why has this country nevertheless had six patriarchs handing it on in succession this way? Here it's unavoidably obscure. You must be able to comprehend before you can enter and act.

"India is vast, there's no place to look for him— / He comes back by night to stay here at Ju Peak." But tell me, where is he right now?

Master Yuan Wu then struck saying, "Blind men!"

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Body of Reality (Dharmakaya) is called the real true body of all Buddhas, the most essential and most inclusive aspect of Buddhahood. Different elaborations on the nature of Dharmakaya have been made in the various schools of Buddhist thought and

practice. Sometimes it is said to comprise two complementary aspects, knowledge and principle, meaning realization of the inherent pattern that matter-energy is one with a void like empty space. The infinite universe or cosmos itself can be seen as the Dharmakaya of True Suchness, represented in the esoteric schools as the manifestation of Vairocana Buddha, the universal illuminator, the so-called Adibuddha or Primordial Buddha. According to esoteric Buddhist teaching, the exoteric schools regard the Dharmakaya as being unmanifest and inexpressible, whereas the esoteric schools see that it is also manifest and expressive. As in the present case, Ch'an Buddhism sees both sides of this. Seng Chao, the great sage of the Middle Path school, quoted several times in this case, said that the Dharmakaya is uncompounded and is not contained in sets of classification or enumeration. See also Cases 39 and 82.

# Turning Over the Tea Kettle at Chao Ch'ing

## CASE

When Minister Wang entered Chao Ch'ing, they were making tea.<sup>1</sup> At the time Elder Lang was holding the kettle for Ming Chao.<sup>2</sup> Lang turned the tea kettle over.<sup>3</sup> Seeing this, the Minister asked the Elder, "What's under the tea stove?"<sup>4</sup> Lang said, "The spirit who holds up stoves."<sup>5</sup> The Minister said, "If it's the spirit who holds up stoves, why then did you turn over the tea kettle?"<sup>6</sup> Lang said, "Serve as an official for a thousand days, lose it in a single morning."<sup>7</sup> The Minister shook out his sleeves and left.<sup>8</sup>

Ming Chao said, "Elder Lang, you've eaten Chao Ch'ing food, but still you go beyond the river to make noise gathering charred wood."<sup>9</sup> Lang said, "What about you, Teacher?"<sup>10</sup> Ming Chao said, "The spirit got the advantage."<sup>11</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "At the time I just would have kicked over the tea stove."<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES

1. A gathering of adepts: there's bound to be something extraordinary. Casual and unconcerned. Everyone set one eye on them. Wang has invited trouble.
2. A bunch of fellows playing with a mud ball. Lang doesn't know how to make tea, so he drags in someone else.
3. Something's happened after all.
4. As it turns out, it's trouble.
5. After all he runs into Wang's arrow. Nonetheless, it's extraordinary.
6. Why doesn't he give him some real provisions? Something's happened.

7. A mistaken indication. What kind of talk is this? Phoney Ch'an men are (as numerous) as hemp seeds, as millet grains.
8. Obviously an adept. I allow that he has one eye.
9. I would go on to give him thirty blows. This lone-eye dragon only has one eye. Still, it takes a clear-eyed man to examine thoroughly.
10. He presses him—he too deserves to be pressed. Never make up such dead senile views!
11. After all, he only has one eye. He was able to speak half. One hand presses down, one hand lifts up.
12. What can be done about it? He draws his bow after the thief has gone. Nonetheless, he still can't be called a member of Te Shan's school. The lot of them, (Wang, Lang, and Ming Chao) are rascals, scoundrels—among them Hsueh Tou is the stand-out.

#### COMMENTARY

Minister Wang was in charge of Ch'uan Chou. He had studied at Chao Ch'ing for a long time. One day he went into the temple while Elder Lang was making tea, and Lang turned over the tea kettle. The Minister too was an adept. As soon as he saw him turn over the tea kettle he immediately asked the Elder, "What is under the tea stove?" When Lang said, "The spirit who holds up stoves," inevitably there was an echo in his words. But what could he do about his head and tail contradicting each other, so that he lost the source meaning and blundered with the sharp point, cutting his own hand? Not only did he wrong himself, but he also offended the other man.

Though this is an affair without gain and loss, if we bring it up, as before there is near and far, initiate and outsider. If you discuss this matter, though it's not in words and phrases, nevertheless you must discern what's alive in the words and phrases. Thus it is said, "He only studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase."

When Elder Lang talked this way he was like a mad dog chasing a clod of dirt. The Minister shook out his sleeves and left, appearing to disapprove of him.

Ming Chao said, "Elder Lang, you've eaten Chao Ch'ing food, but still you go beyond the river to make noise gathering charred wood." This charred wood is sticks of wood burnt by

fire in the wild. Ming Chao used this to illustrate how Elder Lang didn't go to the correct place to walk, but instead ran off outside. Lang pressed him saying, "What about you, Teacher?" Ming Chao said, "The spirit got the advantage." Naturally Ming Chao had a place to show himself without turning his back on Lang's question. Thus it is said, "A good dog bites in without showing his teeth."

Master Che of Kuei Shan said, "Minister Wang was like Hsiang Ju<sup>a</sup> carrying off the jewel—in fact his sideburns were sticking out from under his hat." Since Ming Chao couldn't contain his feelings, it was difficult for him to do what was proper. If I had been Elder Lang, as soon as I saw the Minister shake out his sleeves and go, I would have let go of the tea kettle and laughed out loud. Why? If you see him but don't grab him, it's hard to meet with him even in a thousand years."

If you wish to know the meaning of the Buddha-nature, you must observe times and seasons, causes and conditions. Haven't you heard? Pao Shou asked Nail Cutter Hu, "For a long time I've heard of Nail Cutter Hu—aren't you him?" Hu said, "I am." Shou said, "Can you drive nails into empty space?" Hu said, "I invite the Master to come smash it." Shou then hit him. Hu did not agree, so Shou said, "Another day there will be a talkative teacher who will examine this thoroughly for you." Later Hu saw Chao Chou and related the previous conversation. Chou said, "Why were you hit by him?" Hu said, "I don't know where the fault was." Chou said, "You couldn't even do anything about this one crack, yet you went on to tell him to break up empty space." At this Hu was stopped—Chou spoke for him, "Well, nail up this one crack." At this Hu had an awakening.

When Seven Masters Mi of Ching Chao returned from his foot travels, an old adept asked him, "A piece of well-rope on a moonlit night—people all called it a snake. I wonder what you call it, Seven Masters, when you see the Buddha." Seven Masters said, "If there is something seen, then it's the same as sentient beings." The old adept said, "This is a peach pit that sprouts once in a thousand years."

National Teacher Chung asked the purple-clad Imperial Attendant Monk, "I hear tell that you have [written a commentary] explaining the 'Consideration of Benefit' Scripture. Is this so or not?" The Imperial Attendant said, "It is so." The Na-



tional Teacher said, "One must first understand the Buddha's meaning to be fit to explain the scriptures." The Imperial Attendant said, "If I didn't understand the meaning, how could I dare to say I've explained the Scripture?" The National Teacher then ordered the servant to bring a bowl of water, seven grains of rice, and a single chopstick. Putting them in the bowl, he passed it to the Imperial Attendant and asked, "What meaning is this?" The Imperial Attendant said, "I don't understand." The National Teacher said, "You don't even understand my meaning: how can you go on talking of Buddha's meaning?"

(So we see) Minister Wang and Elder Lang were not the only ones to have conversations like this.

At the end Hsueh Tou turns around and says, "At the time I just would have kicked over the tea stove." Though Ming Chao was like this, he never equalled Hsueh Tou. Hsueh Feng was the cook in Tung Shan's congregation. One day when he was sifting rice, Tung Shan asked, "What are you doing?" Feng said, "Sifting rice." Shan said, "Do you sift the rice to get rid of the grit, or do you sift the grit and get rid of the rice?" Feng said, "Grit and rice are both removed at once." Shan said, "What will the great congregation eat?" Feng turned the bowl over. Shan said, "The right conditions for you are not here." Though he acted this way, how can this compare with Hsueh Tou saying, "At the time I just would have kicked over the tea stove"? What time and season was it for them? Their action naturally stands out in the present and shines through the ages: they had a place of living liberation.

The verse says:

#### VERSE

*(Wang) poses a question like creating a wind—*

His arrow was not shot in vain. He happens to be artful  
yet quintessential.

*(Lang's) responsive action was not skillful.*

Fellows playing with a mud ball—what end is there to it?  
A square peg stuck in a round hole. Indeed, he ran into an  
adept.

*How lamentable! the lone-eyed dragon (Ming Chao)*

He only has one eye. He only gets one part.

*Didn't display his teeth and claws.*

Indeed he had no teeth and claws that could have been displayed. What teeth and claws are you talking about? Don't cheat them.

*Teeth and claws open*

Do you see? After all Hsueh Tou has gotten somewhere. If you have such ability, kick over the tea stove!

*Producing clouds and thunder.*

All the world's people take a beating at once. The world's patchrobed monks have no place to put themselves. Crashing thunder in a parched sky.

*How many times I've gone through the waves of adverse currents!*

Seventy-two blows turns into a hundred and fifty.

#### COMMENTARY

"Posing a question like creating a wind— / The responsive action was not skillful." The Minister's question was not skillful." The Minister's question was like swinging an axe (so swiftly that) it creates a wind. This comes from (a story in) *Chuang Tzu*: a man of Ying was plastering a wall. Only one small gap remained, so he threw a gob of plaster on to fill it in, whereupon a bit of plaster splashed down onto the tip of his nose. Nearby was an axeman who said, "You filled that hole very skillfully. I'll wield my axe and take that plaster off the tip of your nose for you." Though the plaster on his nose was (as small as) a fly speck, he let him remove it. The axeman swung his axe so fast he created a wind and removed the plaster entirely without cutting his nose. The man of Ying stood there without losing his composure. This is what is called wondrous skill on the part of both. Though Elder Lang did respond to Minister Wang's actions, his words were without excellent skillfulness. That's why Hsueh Tou said, "(Wang) poses a question like creating a wind / (Lang's) responsive action was not skillful."

"How lamentable: the lone-eyed dragon / Didn't display his teeth and claws." Ming Chao speaking was indeed very outstanding. Nevertheless, he didn't have the teeth and claws to grasp clouds and hold onto fog. The bystander Hsueh Tou didn't approve. Not containing his feeling, he showed some energy on behalf of Ming Chao.

Hsueh Tou secretly goes to merge with Minister Wang's meaning. He versifies his own statement about kicking over the tea stove: "Teeth and claws open / Producing clouds and thunder / How many times I've gone through the waves of adverse currents!" Yun Men said, "I don't expect you to have waves that go against the current. Just have the mind that goes along with the current and you'll be all right too." Thus it is said, "If you comprehend at the living phrase, you'll never forget." The words and phrases of Elder Lang and of Ming Chao seem dead. If you want to see the living place, just look at Hsueh Tou kicking over the tea stove.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "Hsiang Ju carrying off the jewel"—During the Warring States Period, Lian Hsiang Ju was a minister of the state of Chao, sent to Ch'in to exchange a precious jewel for fifteen cities. Suspecting that the King of Ch'in didn't intend to keep the bargain to turn over the fifteen cities, Hsiang Ju managed to get out of Ch'in and return the jewel safely to his master the King of Chao.

# San Sheng's Golden Fish Who Has Passed through the Net

## POINTER

Piercing, penetrating, one takes the drum and captures the flag. Fortified, entrenched, one inspects the front and oversees the rear.

One who sits on the tiger's head to take the tiger's tail is not yet an adept. Though an ox head disappears and a horse head returns, this too is not yet extraordinary.

But say, how is it when a man who has passed beyond measurements comes? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

San Sheng asked Hsueh Feng, "I wonder, what does the golden fish who has passed through the net use for food?"<sup>1</sup>

Feng said, "When you come out of the net I'll tell you."<sup>2</sup>

Sheng said, "The teacher of fifteen-hundred people and you don't even know what to say!"<sup>3</sup>

Feng said, "My affairs as abbot are many and complicated."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. (The golden fish) is free in all ways. This question is too lofty. You must just know for yourself—then what need is there to ask any further?
2. He diminishes the other man's reputation quite a bit. An expert teacher of our sect is naturally independent.
3. The crashing noise of sudden thunder really startles the crowd. Let him leap about.
4. It's not a matter of victory and defeat. Hsueh Feng lets his move go. This statement is most poisonous.

## COMMENTARY

With Hsueh Feng and San Sheng, though there's one exit and one entry, one thrust and one parry, there is no division into victory and defeat. But say, what is the eye that these two venerable adepts possess?

San Sheng received the secret from Lin Chi. He travelled all over and everyone treated him as an eminent guest. Look at him posing a question. How many people look but cannot find him! He doesn't touch on inherent nature or the Buddha Dharma: instead he asks, "What does the golden fish who has passed through the net use for food?" But say, what was his meaning? Since the golden fish who has passed through the net ordinarily does not eat the tasty food of others, what does he use for food?

Hsueh Feng is an adept: in a casual fashion he replies to San Sheng with only ten or twenty percent. He just said to him, "When you come out of the net, I'll tell you." Fen Yang would call this "a question that displays one's understanding." In the Ts'ao Tung tradition it would be called "a question that uses things." You must be beyond categories and classifications, you must have obtained the use of the great function, you must have an eye on your forehead—only then can you be called a golden fish who has passed through the net. Nevertheless, Hsueh Feng is an adept and can't help but diminish the other man's reputation by saying "When you come out of the net, I'll tell you."

Observe how the two of them held fast to their territories, towering up like ten thousand fathom walls. With this one sentence of Hsueh Feng's anyone other than San Sheng would have been unable to go on. Yet San Sheng too was an adept: thus he knew how to say to him, "The teacher of fifteen hundred people and you don't even know what to say!" But Hsueh Feng said, "My affairs as abbot are many and complicated." How obstinate this statement is!

When these adepts met, there was one capture and one release—(each) acted weak when encountering strength and acted noble when encountering meanness. If you form your understanding in terms of victory and defeat, you haven't seen Hsueh Feng even in dreams. Look at these two men: initially both were solitary and dangerous, lofty and steep; in the end

both were dead and decrepit. But say, was there still gain and loss, victory and defeat? When these adepts harmonized with each other, it was necessarily not this way.

San Sheng was the Temple Keeper at Lin Chi. When Lin Chi was about to pass on he directed, "After I'm gone you mustn't destroy the treasure of the eye of my correct teaching." San Sheng came forward and said, "How could we dare destroy the treasure of the eye of your correct teaching, Master?" Chi said, "In the future, how will you act when people ask questions?" San Sheng then shouted. Chi said, "Who would have known that the treasure of the eye of my correct teaching would perish in this blind donkey?" San Sheng then bowed in homage. Since he was a true son of Lin Chi's, he dared to respond like this.

Afterwards Hsueh Tou just versifies the golden fish who has passed through the net, revealing where these adepts saw each other. The verse says:

#### VERSE

*The golden fish who has passed through the net—*

A thousand soldiers are easy to get, but one general is hard to find. What is the golden fish like? The thousand sages can't do anything about it.

*Stop saying he tarries in the water.*

He stands beyond the clouds, leaping with life. But better not make him out to be a fool.

*He shakes the heavens and sweeps the earth,*

An adept! An adept! This still isn't where he's extraordinary. Let him come out (of the net)—what's to prevent it?

*He flourishes his mane and wags his tail.*

Who would presume to judge the whole from the surface? He's performed a clever trick and startled the crowd.

*When a thousand-foot whale spouts, vast waves fly,*

San Sheng revolved over to That Side: he is indeed outstanding! He's swallowed everyone in the world in a single gulp.

*At a single thunderclap, the pure wind gusts.*

Having eyes and ears, but being like blind and deaf. Who is not frightened?

*The pure wind gusts—  
Where? Bah!*

*Among gods and humans, how many know? How many?  
Hsueh Feng holds down the front lines, San Sheng holds  
down the rear. Why scatter dust and sand? I'll hit and say,  
"Where are you?"*

#### COMMENTARY

"The golden fish who has passed through the net— / Stop saying he tarries in the water." Wu Tsu said that just this one couplet alone completes the verse. Since it's the golden fish who has passed through the net, how could he linger tarrying in the water? He must be where the vast swelling floods of white foamy waves tower up to the skies. But say, during the twenty-four hours of the day, what does he use for food? All of you go back to your places and try to see for sure.

Hsueh Tou said, "This matter is picked up and played with according to one's capacity." When something like the golden fish "flourishes his mane and wags his tail," he does in fact shake heaven and earth.

"When a thousand-foot whale spouts, vast waves fly." This versifies San Sheng saying, "The teacher of fifteen hundred people and you don't even know what to say!" He was like a whale spouting out giant waves. "At a single thunderclap, the pure wind gusts." This versifies Hsueh Feng saying, "My affairs as abbot are many and complicated." He was like the pure wind gusting when a thunderclap sounds. The overall meaning is to praise the two of them for both being adepts.

"The pure wind gusts— / Among gods and humans, how many know? How many?" But say, what do these lines come down to? When the pure wind arises, among gods and humans how many can there be who will know?

# Yun Men's Every Atom Samadhi

## POINTER

Passing beyond stages, absolutely transcending expedient means, mind to mind in mutual accord, each phrase harmonizing with the other. If you haven't entered the gate of great liberation and attained great liberty of action, how can you measure the Buddhas and Patriarchs, or be a mirror and guide for the Essential Vehicle?

But say, when taking charge of a situation directly, whether going with or going against, whether vertically or horizontally, how will you be able to speak a phrase to express yourself? To test, I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "What is every atom samadhi?"<sup>1</sup> Men said, "Food in the bowl, water in the bucket."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. All the monks under heaven make their nests here. His whole mouth is filled with frost. Why is he scattering sand and dirt?
2. A cloth bag filled with awls. Gold dust and sand intermingled. He adds error to error. Inside the palace, they don't ask about the capital.

## COMMENTARY

Can you settle this case properly? If you can, then Yun Men's nostrils are in your hands. If you are unable to settle it properly, then your nostrils are in Yun Men's hands. Yun Men has phrases that cut nails and shear through iron. In this one phrase three phrases are present.



When questioned about this case, some say, "Each grain of the food in the bowl is round; each drop of the water in the bucket is wet." If you understand in this fashion, then you don't see how Yun Men really helped the man.

The verse says:

#### VERSE

*"Food in the bowl, water in the bucket"—*

It's obvious. Why scatter sand and dirt? You must wash your mouth out for three years before you'll get it.

*The talkative teacher can hardly open his mouth.*

He draws in his tongue. Those who know the law fear it. Why then bring it up this way?

*Northern Dipper, Southern Star—their positions are not different:*

Why call east west? Sitting, standing, still and solemn. What's long is the long Body of Reality; what's short is the short Body of Reality.

*White foamy waves flooding the skies arise on level ground.*  
Several fathoms deep underfoot. Guest and host interchange. Suddenly they're on top of your head—what will you do? I hit.

*Trying or not trying,*  
Heavens! Bah!

*Stopping or not stopping,*  
What are you saying, Hsueh Tou? You are adding more hatred and bitterness.

*Each and every one is a rich man's son with no britches.*  
Quite decrepit! The onlooker laughs at them.

#### COMMENTARY

Previously, in his verse on (Case 14) 'Yun Men's An Appropriate Statement,' Hsueh Tou said, "An appropriate statement / How utterly unique! / He wedges a stake into the iron hammer head with no handle hole." Later, in his verse on (Case 73) 'Ma

Tsu's Beyond All the Permutations of Assertion and Denial,' he says, "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black / Clear-eyed patchrobed monks cannot understand." If you are able to penetrate these cases, then you will see this present verse.

At the start Hsueh Tou immediately says, "Food in the bowl, water in the bucket." There's an echo in his words; he shows his capacity in the line. "The talkative teacher can hardly open his mouth." With this he adds footnotes for you. If you demand rational calculations here of the mysterious and the wondrous, it will be even harder to open your mouths.

At the beginning he holds fast. Fearing that there would be someone with eyes in the assembly who would see through him, later he had to forego the primary and bend down to open it up for beginners, coming out with a verse to make people see. As before the Northern Dipper is in the north and the Southern Star is in the south. Thus he says, "Northern Dipper, Southern Star—their positions are not different."

"White foamy waves flooding the skies arise on level ground." When waves suddenly arise on level ground, what will you do? If you catch sight of it in the phenomena, then it's easy. If you seek for it in your conceptual faculty, then you will never be able to find it. This line is like an iron spike: it can't be pulled out, and you can't get your beak into it. If you try to discuss it, though you wish to understand, you won't understand; though you wish to stop, you won't stop wildly displaying your load of ignorance. This is precisely (what is meant by) "Each and every one is a rich man's son with no britches."

Han Shan's poem says:

*Everywhere constantly suffering pain,  
All over vainly discussing themselves,  
Though they have talent, it's abandoned in the  
weedy swamps;  
Having no power, they shut their reed doors.  
The sun comes up over the cliff, but still it's dark,  
The mist melts away, but the valley is still dim.  
The rich men's sons there  
Are all without britches.*

# Hsueh Feng's What Is It?

## POINTER

As soon as there is affirmation and denial, you lose your mind in confusion. If you don't fall into grades and stages, then there is no seeking.

But say, is letting go right, or is holding fast right? At this point, if you have any trace of an interpretative route, you are still stuck in verbal explanations. If you're still involved with devices and objects, then all of this is haunting the fields and forests.<sup>a</sup>

Even if you arrive immediately at the point of solitary liberation, you haven't avoided looking back to the village gate from ten thousand miles away. Can you reach it? If you can't, just comprehend this perfectly obvious public case. To test I am citing it: look!

## CASE

When Hsueh Feng was living in a hut, there were two monks who came to pay their respects.<sup>1</sup> Seeing them coming, he pushed open the door of the hut with his hand, popped out, and said, "What is it?"<sup>2</sup> A monk also said, "What is it?"<sup>3</sup> Feng lowered his head and went back inside the hut.<sup>4</sup>

Later the monk came to Yen T'ou.<sup>5</sup> T'ou asked, "Where are you coming from?"<sup>6</sup> The monk said, "I've come from Ling Nan."<sup>7</sup> T'ou said, "Did you ever go to Hsueh Feng?"<sup>8</sup> The monk said, "I went there."<sup>9</sup> T'ou said, "What did he have to say?" The monk recounted the preceding story.<sup>10</sup> T'ou said, "What did he say?"<sup>11</sup> The monk said, "He said nothing; he lowered his head and went back inside the hut."<sup>12</sup> T'ou said, "Alas! It's too bad I didn't tell him the last word before;<sup>13</sup> if I had told him, no one on earth could cope with old Hsueh."<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the summer the monk again brought up the preceding story to ask for instruction.<sup>15</sup> T'ou said, "Why didn't

you ask earlier?"<sup>16</sup> The monk said, "I didn't dare to be casual."<sup>17</sup> T'ou said, "Though Hsueh Feng is born of the same lineage as me, he doesn't die in the same lineage as me."<sup>18</sup> If you want to know the last word, just this is it."<sup>19</sup>

## NOTES

1. What for? Their crimes are listed on the same indictment.
2. Ghost eyes. A flute with no holes. He raises his head, wearing horns.
3. A mud ball. A felt-pounding board. The arrow points meet.
4. There are thorns in the soft mud. Hsueh Feng is like a dragon without feet, like a snake with horns. This is the hardest of all to handle.
5. He had to ask before he could understand. Only one on the same path would know.
6. It takes an adept to be able to be this way. This (monk) suffers defeat again and again. If Yen T'ou wasn't a fellow student of Hsueh Feng he probably would have let him go.
7. What news does he bring? He must convey the news. Did he see Hsueh Feng?
8. He already exposed him a while ago. He mustn't say he didn't go there.
9. A truthful man is hard to find. He breaks it in two.
10. So he goes on this way. Again and again he suffers defeat.
11. He should have hit the monk in the mouth, (but instead) he's lost his nostrils.
12. Again he suffers defeat. But tell me, what is he?
13. Vast swelling billows of white foamy waves flooding the skies.
14. A leper drags along his companions. Not necessarily. Even Mt. Sumeru would be shattered to bits. But say, where is his trap?
15. Already this monk is not alert. When the real thief has already been gone for quite a while, he draws his bow.
16. He deserves to have his meditation seat overturned. He's gone by.
17. This staff was originally for the monk to be beaten with. Yen T'ou pierced his nostrils. An imprisoned man increases in wisdom. It's already a double case.
18. He fills the heavens and covers the earth.
19. Though he utterly swindles ordinary people, I don't believe him. He almost couldn't complain.

## COMMENTARY

Whoever would uphold the teaching of our school must discern how to take charge of the situation; he must know advance and retreat, right and wrong; he must understand killing and giving life, capturing and releasing. If one's eyes suddenly blur and go sightless, everywhere he goes, when he encounters a question, he questions, and when he encounters an answer, he answers, scarcely realizing that his nostrils are in the hands of others.

As for Hsueh Feng and Yen T'ou, they were fellow students under Te Shan. When these monks called on Hsueh Feng their views only reached to such a place (as seen in the case); when the monk saw Yen T'ou, he still didn't complete his business. He troubled these two worthies to no purpose. One question, one answer, one capture, one release—right up till today this case has been impenetrably obscure and inexplicable for everyone in the world. But tell me, where is it impenetrable and obscure?

Though Hsueh Feng had travelled all over through the various localities, at last it was at Tortoise Mountain because Yen T'ou spurred him on that he finally attained annihilation of doubt and great penetration.

Later, due to a purge, Yen T'ou became a ferryman by the shores of Lake O Chu (in Hupeh). On each shore hung a board: when someone wanted to cross, he would knock on the board. T'ou would call out, "Which side are you crossing to?" Then he would wave his oar and come out from among the reeds.

(After his enlightenment with Yen T'ou) Hsueh Feng returned to Ling Nan and lived in a hut. These monks were people who had studied for a long time. When he saw them coming, Hsueh Feng pushed open the door of the hut, popped out and said, "What is it?" Some people these days when questioned in this way immediately go and gnaw on his words. But these monks were unusual too; they just said to him "What is it?" Feng lowered his head and went back into the hut. This is frequently called "wordless understanding;" hence, these monks couldn't find him. Some say that, having been questioned by these monks, Hsueh Feng was in fact speechless, and so he returned to the hut. How far they are from knowing that there is something deadly poisonous in Hsueh Feng's intention. Though Hsueh Feng gained the advantage, nevertheless while he hid his body, he revealed his shadow.

Later one monk left Hsueh Feng and took this case to have Yen T'ou decide it. Once he got there, Yen T'ou asked him, "Where are you coming from?" The monk said, "I've come from Ling Nan." T'ou said, "Did you get to Hsueh Feng?" If you want to see Hsueh Feng, you better hurry up and look at this question. The monk said, "I went there." T'ou said, "What did he have to say?" This question was not posed to no purpose. But the monk did not understand: he just turned around following the trend of his words. T'ou said, "What did he say?" The monk said, "He lowered his head and went back into the hut without saying anything." This monk was far from knowing that Yen T'ou had put on straw sandals and had already walked around inside his belly several times.

Yen T'ou said, "Too bad I didn't tell him the last word before; if I had told him, no one on earth could cope with old Hsueh." Yen T'ou too supports the strong but doesn't help the weak. As before the monk was flooded with darkness and didn't distinguish initiate from naive. Harboring a bellyful of doubt, he really thought that Hsueh Feng did not understand.

At the end of the summer he again brought up this story and asked Yen T'ou for more instruction. T'ou said, "Why didn't you ask earlier?" This old fellow was crafty. The monk said, "I didn't dare to be casual." T'ou said, "Though Hsueh Feng is born of the same lineage as me, he doesn't die in the same lineage as me. If you want to know the last word, just this is it." Yen T'ou indeed did not spare his eyebrows! In the end, how will all of you people understand?

Hsueh Feng was the cook in Te Shan's community. One day the noon meal was late; Te Shan took his bowl and went down to the teaching hall. Feng said, "The bell hasn't rung yet, the drum hasn't been sounded—where is this old fellow going with his bowl?" Without saying anything, Te Shan lowered his head and returned to his abbot's quarters. When Hsueh Feng took this up with Yen T'ou, T'ou said, "Even the great Te Shan doesn't understand the last word."

Te Shan heard of this and ordered his attendant to summon Yen T'ou to the abbot's quarters. Shan said, "So you don't approve of me?" T'ou tacitly indicated what he meant. The next day Shan went up to the hall and taught in a way which was different from usual; in front of the monks' hall T'ou clapped his hands and laughed loudly saying, "Happily the old

fellow does understand the last word! After this no one on earth will be able to do anything about him. Nevertheless, he's only got three years."

When Hsueh Feng saw Te Shan speechless, he thought that he had gained the advantage. He certainly didn't know that he had run into a thief. Since he had met a thief, later Feng too knew how to be a thief. Thus an Ancient said, "At the final word, one first reaches the impenetrable barrier."

Some say that Yen T'ou excelled Hsueh Feng; they have misunderstood. Yen T'ou always used this ability; he taught his community saying, "Clear-eyed folks have no clichés to nest in. Spurning things is considered superior, pursuing things is considered inferior. As for this last word, even if you've personally seen the Patriarchs, you still wouldn't be able to understand it rationally."

When Te Shan's noon meal was late, the old fellow picked up his bowl himself and went down to the teaching hall. Yen T'ou said, "Even great Te Shan doesn't understand the last word." Hsueh Tou picked this out and said, "I've heard that from the beginning a lone-eyed dragon has only one eye. You certainly didn't know that Te Shan was a toothless tiger. If it hadn't been for Yen T'ou seeing through him, how could we know that yesterday and today are not the same? Do all of you want to understand the last word? An Ancient said, 'I only allow that the old barbarian knows; I don't allow that he understands.'"

From ancient times up till now, the public cases have been extremely diverse, like a forest of brambles. If you can penetrate through, no one on earth can do anything about you, and all the Buddhas of past, present, and future defer to you. If you are unable to penetrate, study Yen T'ou saying, "Though Hsueh Feng is born in the same lineage as me, he doesn't die in the same lineage as me." Spontaneously, in just this one sentence, he had a way to express himself.

#### VERSE

##### *The last word*

It's already present before any words. You think it's real.  
If you look right now at it, you'll go blind.

*Is spoken for you;*

The tongue falls to the ground. It can't be spoken. It has a head but no tail; it has a tail but no head.

*The time of light and dark pair by pair:*

Hsueh Tou is an old fellow who's full of complications. Like an ox without horns, like a tiger with horns. This one and that one are this way.

*Born of the same lineage, they share the knowledge,*

What clan is this? There's no connection between this one and that one. You're headed southeast, I'm headed northwest.

*Dying of different lineages, they're utterly separated.*

The staff is in my hand. How can you blame me? Why are your nostrils in someone else's hands?

*Utterly separated—*

Do you want to take a beating? Where is there to search?

*Even Yellow Head (Buddha) and Blue Eyes (Bodhidharma)  
have yet to discern.*

Everyone on earth loses his point and is tongue-tied. I too am this way; nevertheless, others are not. "I only allow that the old barbarian knows; I don't allow that he understands."

*South, North, East, West, let us return—*

Hsueh Tou has gathered everyone in. His trail is still following the Five-Color Thread (leading to paradise). I ask you for a staff.

*And in the depths of the night together look at the snow on the  
thousand crags.*

They still have half a month's journey. Let the world be covered with snow, filling the channels and gullies. There is no one who understands. You too are just blind people: do you know the last word? I'll hit!

#### COMMENTARY

"The last word is spoken for you." When Hsueh Tou made up his verse on this last word, he intentionally went to extremes falling into the weeds to help people. His verse was thorough-



going as a verse, but he only versified a little of the fine detail. If you want to see all the way through, this is still not enough.

Daring to say even more, Hsueh Tou opened his big mouth and said, "The time of light and dark pair by pair" to open a road for you and also to finish it off for you in one line. Then at the end he provided even more explanations for you. Just as Chao Ch'ing one day asked Lo Shan, "When Yen T'ou says, 'So, so, not so, not so,' what is his meaning?" Lo Shan called out, "Great Master," and Master Chao Ch'ing responded. Shan said, "Both light and both dark." Ch'ing bowed in thanks and left. Three days later he again questioned Lo Shan, "A few days ago I received your compassionate instruction; it's just that I couldn't see through it." Shan said, "I've told you the whole thing already." Ch'ing said, "Master, please light the way." Shan said, "If so, Great Master, go ahead and ask about what you are in doubt over." Ch'ing said, "What is 'both light and both dark'?" Shan said, "Born the same and dying the same." Then Ch'ing bowed in thanks and left.

Later there was a monk who asked Chao Ch'ing, "How is it when being born the same and dying the same?" Ch'ing said, "Shut your dog mouth." The monk said, "Try to eat food with your mouth closed, Great Master." This monk then came to ask Lo Shan, "How is it when being born the same and dying the same?" Shan said, "Like an ox without horns." The monk asked, "How is it when being born the same but not dying the same?" Shan said, "Like a tiger with horns." The last word is precisely this truth.

There was a monk in Lo Shan's congregation who used this idea to put a question to Chao Ch'ing. Ch'ing said, "This one, this one, they all know. Why? If I spoke a phrase on the eastern continent, they would know it on the western continent too. If I spoke a phrase in heaven, in the human world they would also know it. All minds know each other, all eyes shine on each other."

Born of the same lineage, they're still easy to see. Not dying in the same lineage, they're utterly separate, and not even Shakyamuni or Bodhidharma can find them.

"South, North, East, West, let us return." There's something of a good world. "And in the depths of night together look at the snow on the thousand crags." But say, is this "both light and both dark" or is it "born of the same lineage" or is it "dying

in the same lineage''? Patchrobed monks who have eyes should try to discern.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The image here is of ghosts clinging to trees and grasses, likened to people clinging to things, especially to words and expressions.

# Chao Chou Lets Asses Cross, Lets Horses Cross

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "For a long time I've heard of the stone bridge of Chao Chou, but now that I've come here I just see a simple log bridge."<sup>1</sup>

Chou said, "You just see the log bridge; you don't see the stone bridge."<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "What is the stone bridge?"<sup>3</sup>

Chou said, "It lets asses cross, it lets horses cross."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. Here's another man who comes to grab the tiger's whiskers. This is the proper business of patchrobed monks.
2. Chou is accustomed to getting the advantage. This old fellow is selling off his body.
3. He's climbed up onto Chou's hook, after all.
4. A single net cast over "asses" and "horses." In fact all the people in the world have no place to breathe; once dead they don't come back to life again.

## COMMENTARY

In (the place) Chao Chou there's a stone bridge; ever since it was built (in the Latter Han dynasty) by Li Ying, it has been famous throughout the country. A simple log bridge is a bridge (made of) a single log.

Intentionally downgrading (Chao Chou's) grandeur, this monk questioned him saying, "For a long time I've heard of the stone bridge of Chao Chou, but now that I've come here I just see a simple log bridge." Chou immediately said, "You just see

the log bridge, but you don't see the stone bridge," based on the other man's question. This seems just like ordinary conversation, but Chao Chou used it to hook him. This monk after all climbed onto the hook; he followed up behind and asked, "What is the stone bridge?" Chou said, "It lets asses cross, it lets horses cross." Inevitably Chao Chou naturally has a place to show himself in his words. Chao Chou is not like Lin Chi or Te Shan, carrying on with blows and shouts—he just uses words and speech to kill and bring to life.

Take a good look at this case. It seems to be an ordinary battle of wits; it is nevertheless hard to approach.

One day Chao Chou was with the head monk looking at the stone bridge when he asked the head monk, "Who built this?" The head monk said, "Li Ying built it." Chou said, "When he built it, where did he start?" The head monk had no reply. Chou said, "You're always talking about the stone bridge, but when you're asked about where it was started, you don't even know."

Also one day when Chao Chou was sweeping the floor, a monk asked, "Teacher, you are a man of knowledge—why is there dust?" Chou said, "It's something that comes from outside." Again the monk asked, "In a pure and clean monastery, why is there dust?" Chou said, "There's another little bit."

Also a monk asked, "What is the Path?" Chou said, "It's outside the wall." The monk said, "I'm not asking about that path, I'm asking about the Great Way." Chou said, "The Great Way runs through the capital."

Chao Chou was partial to using such devices; he would go to the safe secure place of ordinary reality to help people. He never cut his hand on the sharp point; naturally he was solitary and lofty, using these devices most wondrously.

Hsueh Tou's verse says,

#### VERSE

*He doesn't set up the solitary and dangerous; in that his path is lofty.*

You must get to this realm before you realize. The words are still in our ears. This goes back to his own provisions.

*Entering the ocean, he must hook a giant tortoise.*

He cuts off the essential crossing place and doesn't let profane or holy pass. Shrimps or clams, snails or oysters aren't worth asking about. People of power don't come by twos and threes.

*His contemporary the Elder of Kuan Hsi is worth a laugh;*  
There's been another such man who's come this way,  
who had such ability to use active devices.

*Though he knew how to say "Whistling Arrow," his effort was in vain.*

He still has half a month's journey. He seems to resemble, but isn't really.

#### COMMENTARY

"He doesn't set up the solitary and dangerous; in that his path is lofty." Hsueh Tou is praising Chao Chou's usual way of helping people. Chou doesn't establish mysteries or marvels, and doesn't set up the solitary and dangerous. He isn't like those in various places who say that only breaking up empty space, smashing Mount Sumeru to bits, producing dust on the bottom of the ocean and pounding waves on Mount Sumeru can be called the Path of the Patriarchal Teachers. Thus Hsueh Tou says, "He doesn't set up the solitary and dangerous; in that his path is lofty." Others may tower up like ten-mile-high walls to display the extraordinary spiritual effects of the Buddha Dharma—but though they're solitary and dangerous, lofty and steep, this is not as good as not setting up the solitary and dangerous, and simply acting ordinary, naturally turning smoothly. Chao Chou doesn't establish anything, yet he is established himself; he doesn't make anything high, yet he is high himself. When capacity goes beyond solitary and dangerous, only then do we see profound wonders.

Thus Hsueh Tou says, "Entering the ocean, he must hook a giant tortoise." Look at Chao Chou: a master of our school with eyes, he is perfectly at ease as he imparts a word and employs a device. He doesn't hook shrimps or clams, snails or oysters—he only hooks giant tortoises. Indeed he is an adept! This one line is used to illustrate the Case.

"His contemporary the Elder of Kuan Hsi is worth laughing at." Haven't you heard—a monk asked Kuan Hsi, "I've long heard of Kuan Hsi ('Pouring Mountain Stream'). Now that I've come here I only see a hemp-soaking pool." Hsi said, "You just see the hemp-soaking pool; you don't see the pouring mountain stream." The monk said, "What is the pouring mountain stream?" Hsi said, "Swift as a whistling arrow."

Also a monk asked Huang Lung, "I've long heard of Huang Lung ('Yellow Dragon'), but now that I've come here I only see a red striped snake." Lung said, "You just see the red striped snake; you don't see the yellow dragon." The monk said, "What is the yellow dragon?" Lung said, "Slithering along." The monk said, "How is it when he suddenly encounters the (dragon-eating) Garuda bird?" Lung said, "Difficult to stay alive." The monk said, "If so, then he'll get eaten up by the bird." Lung said, "Thank you for feeding me."

These are both cases of setting up the solitary and dangerous. Though Kuan Hsi and Huang Lung are both right, nevertheless they did waste effort. They never equalled Chao Chou's ordinary action. That's why Hsueh Tou says, "Though he knew how to say 'Whistling Arrow,' his effort was in vain."

Leaving Kuan Hsi and Huang Lung aside for the moment, how will you understand when Chao Chou says, "It lets asses cross, it lets horses cross"? Try to do it.

# Pai Chang's Wild Ducks

## POINTER

The whole world does not hide it—his entire capacity stands alone revealed. He encounters situations without getting stuck—with every move he has the ability to assert himself. In his phrases there's no partiality—everywhere he has the intention to kill people.

But say, in the end, where do the Ancients go to rest? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Once when Great Master Ma and Pai Chang were walking together they saw some wild ducks fly by.<sup>1</sup> The Great Master asked, "What is that?"<sup>2</sup> Chang said, "Wild ducks."<sup>3</sup> The Great Master said, "Where have they gone?"<sup>4</sup> Chang said, "They've flown away."<sup>5</sup> The Great Master then twisted Pai Chang's nose.<sup>6</sup> Chang cried out in pain.<sup>7</sup> The Great Master said, "When have they ever flown away?"<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. Two fellows in the weeds. They're rolling around in the weeds. Why suddenly notice the ducks?
2. You should know, Teacher. This old fellow doesn't even know his nostrils.
3. Chang's nostrils are already in the hands of the other man. He just offers the actual facts. The second ladleful of foul water will be even more poisonous.
4. His first arrow was still light, but the second arrow is deep. A second enticing peck. Here too Ma Tsu should know for himself.
5. He just rolls along behind Ma Tsu. He's stumbled past what's right in front of him.

6. The nostrils born of his parents are in the hands of someone else. Ma Tsu turned the spear around and twisted Chang's nostrils around.
7. It's right here. Can it be called wild ducks? Are you conscious of pain?
8. Better not deceive people. From the beginning this old fellow has been making his living inside a ghost cave.

### COMMENTARY

If you observe this case with the correct eye, unexpectedly it's Pai Chang who has the correct basis, whereas Great Master Ma is creating waves where there is no wind. If all of you want to be teachers of Buddhas and Patriarchs, then study Pai Chang. If you want to be unable to save even yourselves, then study the Great Master Ma. Observe how those Ancients were never absent from Here, twenty-four hours a day.

At a young age Pai Chang left behind the dusts of wordly life and became well versed in the three studies (discipline, meditation, and wisdom). When Ma Tsu (known as) Ta Chi was teaching at Nan Ch'ang, Pai Chang set his heart on joining him. For twenty years he served as Ma Tsu's attendant, until the time of his second calling (on Ma Tsu, as related in the commentary to Case 11), when he was finally greatly enlightened at Ma Tsu's shout.

But these days some say, "Where there is fundamentally no enlightenment, they construct the gate of 'enlightenment' and establish this affair." If you view it in this way, you are like a flea on a lion's body feeding itself on the lion's flesh. Haven't you seen where an Ancient said, "If the source is not deep, the stream is not long; if the wisdom is not great, the vision is not far-reaching." If you entertain the understanding that enlightenment is a construct, how could the Buddhist Teaching have come down to the present?

Look: once when Great Master Ma and Pai Chang were walking together they saw some wild ducks fly by. How could the Great Master not have known they were wild ducks? Why did he nevertheless ask like this? Tell me, what does his meaning come down to? When Pai Chang merely followed up behind him, Ma Tsu then twisted his nose. Chang cried out in pain



and Ma Tsu said, "When have they ever flown away?" At this Pai Chang had insight. But these days some people misunderstand: as soon as they're questioned, they immediately make a cry of pain. Fortunately they can't leap out of it.

When teachers of our school help people, they must make them penetrate through. You see that Pai Chang didn't understand, that he didn't avoid cutting his hand on the point. Ma Tsu just wanted to make him understand this matter. Thus it is said, "When you understand, you can make use of it wherever you are; if you don't understand, then the conventional truth prevails." If Ma Tsu hadn't twisted Pai Chang's nose at that time, the conventional truth would have prevailed. It's also necessary when encountering circumstances and meeting conditions to turn them around and return them to oneself; to have no gaps at any time is called "the ground of nature bright and clear." What's the use of one who just haunts the forests and fields, accepting what's ahead of an ass but behind a horse?<sup>a</sup>

Observe how Ma Tsu and Pai Chang act this way; though they seem radiant and spiritual, nevertheless they don't remain in radiance and spirituality. Pai Chang cried out in pain; if you see it as such, then the whole world does not hide it, and it is perfectly manifest everywhere. Thus it is said, "Penetrate one place, and you penetrate a thousand places, ten thousand places all at once."

When Ma Tsu went up to the hall the next day, as soon as the congregation had assembled, Pai Chang came forward and rolled up the bowing mat. Ma Tsu immediately left his seat. After he had returned to his abbot's quarters, he asked Pai Chang, "I had just gone up to the hall and had not yet preached; why did you roll up the mat right away?" Chang said, "Yesterday I had my nose twisted by you, Teacher, and it hurt." Tsu said, "Where were you keeping your mind yesterday?" Chang said, "Today the nose no longer hurts." Tsu said, "You have profound knowledge of Today's affair." Chang then bowed and returned to the attendants' quarters, crying. One of his fellow attendants asked, "Why are you crying?" Chang said, "Go ask our Master." The attendant then went to ask Ma Tsu. Tsu said, "Go ask Pai Chang." When the attendant returned to their quarters to ask Pai Chang, Chang laughed loudly. The attendant said, "You were just crying—now why are you laughing?"

Chang said, "I was crying before, now I'm laughing." Look at Pai Chang after his enlightenment; turning smoothly, he can't be trapped. Naturally he's sparkling clear on all sides.

# VERSE

*Wild ducks—*

Gathering in flocks. Here's another one.

*Who knows where they are?*

Why use wild ducks? They're as numerous as hemp or millet seeds.

*Ma Tsu saw them coming and they had words with each other—*

What end is there to creating complications? What did they say? Ma Tsu alone recognizes the outstanding one.

*He told all about the scene of the clouds on the mountains and the moon over the sea.*

The ladle handle of the eastern house is long; the ladle handle of the western house is short. Who knows how many complications he created?

*As before Chang didn't understand, but said, "They've flown away."*

Gaa! Don't say he didn't know how to speak. Where did they fly off to?

*Pai Chang wanted to fly away,*

His nostrils were in the other man's hands. This is already adding footnotes for others.

*But Ma Tsu held him fast.*

With grandmotherly kindness. What else did he say?

*Speak! Speak!*

What is there to say? Don't make me speak too. Don't make a wild duck cry. Heavens! Right where you are you deserve thirty blows. Who knows where they went to?

# COMMENTARY

Directly and immediately, Hsueh Tou makes his verse saying, "Wild ducks—who knows where they are?" But say, how

many are there? "Ma Tsu saw them coming and they had words with each other." This versifies Ma Tsu asking Pai Chang, "What is that?" and Chang saying, "Wild ducks." "He told all about the scene of the clouds on the mountains and the moon over the sea." This versifies Ma Tsu again asking, "Where have they gone?" The teaching which Great Master Ma conveyed to Pai Chang spontaneously revealed everything. As before Chang did not understand; instead he said, "They've flown away." Twice he missed it.

With "Pai Chang wanted to fly away, but Ma Tsu held him fast," Hsueh Tou settles the case on the basis of the facts. He also says, "Speak! Speak!" This is where Hsueh Tou turns himself around. But say, how will you speak? If you make a cry of pain, then you're wrong. If you don't make a cry of pain, then how do you understand it? Though Hsueh Tou versifies most wondrously, no matter what he does he can't leap out either.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "What's ahead of an ass but behind a horse" is often referred specifically to the "radiant spirituality," a designation of the conscious radiance of the mind temporarily cleared or halted by meditation, which is beyond unregenerate ignorant people, but is not yet thorough realization of personal and phenomenal emptiness, still in the realm of subjectivity.

# Yun Men Extends Both Hands

## POINTER

Having penetrated through and out of birth and death, he sets his devices in motion. Perfectly at ease, he shears through iron and cuts through nails. Wherever he goes he covers heaven and covers earth.

But say, whose behavior is this? To test I'm citing this old case; look!

## CASE

Yun Men asked a monk, "Where did you come here from?"<sup>1</sup> The monk said, "Hsi Ch'an."<sup>2</sup> Yun Men said, "What words and phrases are there at Hsi Ch'an these days?"<sup>3</sup> The monk extended both hands;<sup>4</sup> Yun Men slapped him once.<sup>5</sup>

The monk said, "I'm still talking."<sup>6</sup> Yun Men then extended his two hands.<sup>7</sup> The monk was speechless,<sup>8</sup> so Yun Men hit him.<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. Don't say Hsi Ch'an. A probing pole, a reed shade. Don't say east, west, north or south.
2. As it turns out, he's too literal. At that moment the monk should have given him some of his own provisions.
3. "I want to bring it up, but I fear that it would startle you, Teacher." Yun Men profoundly discriminates among oncoming winds. "Hsi Ch'an was like you, Teacher, talking in your sleep."
4. He's been defeated. He took in a thief and got his house ransacked. This will inevitably cause people to doubt.
5. He acts according to the imperative. The monk should be hit. A fleeting chance is hard to meet with.
6. So you want to change your plea? Nevertheless, he seems to have the ability to capture the flag and carry off the drums.

7. Danger! The monk is being given an excellent mount, but he doesn't know how to ride it.
8. What a pity!
9. Don't let him go. It should be Yun Men who takes this beating. Why? When you don't settle what should be settled, instead you invite disorder. How many blows should you receive? Yun Men let up on him a little. If he hadn't let up, what should he have done?

## COMMENTARY

Yun Men asked this monk, "Where did you come here from?" The monk said, "Hsi Ch'an." This is direct face to face talk, like a flash of lightening. Men said, "What words and phrases are there at Hsi Ch'an these days?" This too is just ordinary conversation. This monk, however, is also an adept; contrary to expectations, he goes to test Yun Men—he immediately extended his two hands. If it had been an ordinary person who met with this test, we would have seen him flustered and agitated. But Yun Men has a mind like flint struck sparks, like flashing lightening; immediately he slapped him.

The monk said, "You may hit me all right, but nevertheless I'm still talking." This monk had a place to turn around, so Yun Men opened up and extended his two hands. The monk was speechless, so Yun Men hit him.

Look—since Yun Men is an adept, whenever he takes a step he knows where the step comes down. He knows how to observe in front and take notice behind, not losing his way. This monk only knows how to look ahead; he's unable to observe behind.

## VERSE

*At once he takes the tiger's head and the tiger's tail—*

The single-edged sword that kills people, the double-edged sword that brings people to life. Only this monk can handle it. A thousand soldiers are easy to get, but one general is hard to find.

*His stern majesty extends everywhere.*

He cuts off the tongues of everyone on earth. He covers heaven and covers earth.

*I ask back, "Didn't you know how dangerous it was?"*

You shouldn't blindly fetter and beat them. From the beginning Hsueh Tou himself didn't know. You are speaking carelessly, Reverend.

*Hsueh Tou says, "I leave off."*

If he hadn't left off, then what? Everyone on earth loses out all at once. I hit the meditation seat once.

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou's verse on this story is very easy to understand—its overall meaning is to praise the sharp point of Yun Men's ability. Thus he says, "At once he takes the tiger's head and the tiger's tail." An Ancient said, "Occupy the tiger's head, take the tiger's tail, then at the first phrase you'll understand the source meaning." Hsueh Tou just settles the case on the basis of the facts. He likes the way Yun Men is able to occupy the tiger's head and also take the tiger's tail. When the monk extended his two hands and Yun Men immediately hit him, this was occupying the tiger's head. When Yun Men extended two hands and the monk was speechless so that Yun Men hit him again, this was taking the tiger's tail. When head and tail are taken together, the eye is like a shooting star.

Yun Men is naturally like stone-struck sparks, like flashing lightning; in fact, "His stern majesty extends everywhere." The wind whistles all over the world.

"I ask back, 'Didn't you know how dangerous it was?'" Unavoidably there was danger. Hsueh Tou says, "I leave off." But say, right now as I don't leave off, what will you do? Everyone in the world will have to take a beating.

Followers of Ch'an these days all say that when Yun Men extended his two hands, the monk should have repaid him with some of his own provisions. This seems correct, but in reality isn't. Yun Men can't just get you to stop this way—there must be something else besides.

# Tao Wu's Condolence Call

## POINTER

Secure and intimate with the whole of reality, one obtains realization right there. In contact with the flow, able to turn things around, one assumes responsibility directly.

As for cutting off confusion in the light of a stone-struck spark or a flash of lightning, or towering up like a mile-high wall where one occupies the tiger's head and takes the tiger's tail—this I leave aside for the moment. Is there a way to help people by letting out a continuous path or not? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

Tao Wu and Chien Yuan went to a house to make a condolence call. Yuan hit the coffin and said, "Alive or dead?"<sup>1</sup> Wu said, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead."<sup>2</sup> Yuan said, "Why won't you say?"<sup>3</sup> Wu said, "I won't say."<sup>4</sup> Halfway back, as they were returning,<sup>5</sup> Yuan said, "Tell me right away, Teacher; if you don't tell me, I'll hit you."<sup>6</sup> Wu said, "You may hit me, but I won't say,"<sup>7</sup> Yuan then hit him.<sup>8</sup>

Later Tao Wu passed on. Yuan went to Shih Shuang and brought up the foregoing story.<sup>9</sup> Shuang said, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead."<sup>10</sup> Yuan said, "Why won't you say?"<sup>11</sup> Shuang said, "I won't say, I won't say."<sup>12</sup> At these words Yuan had an insight."<sup>13</sup>

One day Yuan took a hoe into the teaching hall and crossed back and forth, from east to west and west to east.<sup>14</sup> Shuang said, "What are you doing?"<sup>15</sup> Yuan said, "I'm looking for relics of our late master."<sup>16</sup> Shuang said, "Vast waves spread far and wide, foaming billows flood the skies—what relics of our late master are you looking for?"<sup>17</sup>

Hsueh Tou added a comment saying, "Heavens! Heavens!"<sup>18</sup>

Yuan said, "This is just where I should apply effort."<sup>19</sup>

Fu of T'ai Yuan said, "The late master's relics are still present."<sup>20</sup>

## NOTES

1. What is he saying? He sure isn't alert. This fellow is still lingering in duality.
2. When a dragon puffs, fog gathers; when a tiger roars, wind rises. He buys the hat to fit the head. He's kind-hearted.
3. He's stumbled past. As it turns out, he misunderstands.
4. He pours foul water right on Yuan's head. The first arrow was still light, but the second arrow goes deep.
5. Not very alert.
6. If he hits, then he'll be getting somewhere. It's rare to meet with the pierced-ear traveller (Bodhidharma); you often encounter travellers who cut a notch in the boat (thinking to mark the spot on the water which the boat is going over at a given time).<sup>a</sup> If you are like this latter kind of fool, you'll enter hell as fast as an arrow.
7. Again and again he must repeat this. He gets in close to take him. This old fellow's whole body is covered with muddy water. His original attitude is unchanging.
8. He should be hit. But say, why does he hit him? From the beginning there have been people who have received unjust beatings.
9. He knows, yet deliberately offends. He doesn't know whether he's right or wrong—if he's right, that would be wonderful.
10. How fresh and new! Yet there have always been people who eat this kind of food and drink.
11. Though his words are the same, his intent is different. But say, is this the same as or different from his asking before?
12. In the heavens and on earth. If the waves of Ts'ao Ch'i resembled each other, innumerable ordinary people would get bogged down.
13. The blind man! Better not fool me.
14. Within death he has found life. He should show some life for his late master. Don't question him—but observe this fellow's embarrassment.
15. He just follows along behind.
16. He hangs a medicine bag on the back of a hearse. Too bad that he was not so careful at first. What are you saying, Yuan?
17. Only that adept could do this. Why gather in crowds?



18. Too late. Hsueh Tou draws his bow after the thief has gone. He should be buried in the same pit.
19. But tell me, what does this really mean? What has the late master ever said to you? From beginning to end, and even up till now, this fellow has been unable to get himself out.
20. Does everyone see them? They're like flashing lightning. What worn out straw sandals are these? Fu has realized a little bit.

### COMMENTARY

Tao Wu and Chien Yuan went to a house to make a condolence call. Yuan hit the coffin and said, "Alive or dead?" Wu said, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead." If you can immediately enter at these lines, if at these words you immediately know what they come down to, then this is the key to penetrating beyond life and death. Otherwise, if you can't, then you will miss it over and over again even though it's right in front of you.

Observe how these Ancients, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, were always mindful of this matter. As soon as they got to the house to offer condolences, Chien Yuan hit the coffin and asked Tao Wu, "Alive or dead?" Without stirring a hairsbreadth, Tao Wu answered him saying, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead." Chien Yuan was face to face with it, but he stumbled past, running after the other man's words. He went on to say, "Why won't you say?" Wu said, "I won't say, I won't say." This can be called Wu meeting an error with an error, his heart bared entirely.

Yuan was still not awake himself: halfway back as they were returning he again said, "Tell me right away, Teacher; if you don't tell me, I'll hit you." What does this fellow know of good and bad? This is what is called "a good intention not getting a good reward." With tender kindness as before, Tao Wu said more to him; "You may hit me, but I won't say." Yuan then hit him. Even so, Tao Wu nevertheless won the point. Tao Wu was dripping with blood like this to help him, but Chien Yuan could be so unseeing!

After being hit, Tao Wu then said to Chien Yuan, "You should go away for a while. I fear that if the monastery's director of affairs finds out, he would make trouble for you." He

secretly sent Chien Yuan away. Yuan later came to a small temple where he heard a workman reciting the Avalokitesvara scripture, where it says, "To those who would attain salvation as monks, he appears as a monk to expound the Dharma for them." Suddenly Yuan was greatly enlightened and said, "At that time I was wrongly suspicious of my late teacher. How was I to know that this affair isn't in words and phrases?" As an Ancient said, "Even someone great beyond measure can be whirled around in the stream of words."

Some interpret intellectually and say that when Tao Wu said, "I won't say, I won't say," he had thereby already said something, that this is what is called "turning a back-flip, making people unable to get ahold of you." If you understand in this fashion, how will you attain tranquility? If your feet tread the real earth, you aren't even a hairsbreadth away.

Haven't you heard? Seven women sages were travelling through the Forest of Corpses. One of the women pointed to a corpse and asked her sisters, "The corpse is here—where is the person?" The eldest sister said, "What? What?" and all seven together experienced the tolerance of birthlessness. But say, how many are there like this? In a thousand or ten thousand, there's just one.

Later Chien Yuan went to Shih Shuang and related his previous conversation with Tao Wu. Same as before, Shih Shuang said, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead," and Yuan said, "Why won't you say?" When Shih Shuang said, "I won't say, I won't say," Yuan was immediately enlightened.

One day Yuan took a hoe into the teaching hall and crossed back and forth, from east to west and west to east. He intended to display his insight. Sure enough Shuang asked him, "What are you doing?" Yuan said, "I'm looking for relics of our late master." Shuang then cut off his footsteps, saying, "Vast waves spread far and wide, foaming billows flood the skies—what relics of our late master are you looking for?" Since Yuan was looking for relics of the late master, why did Shih Shuang nevertheless talk to him this way? At this point, if you can comprehend the words, "I won't say alive, and I won't say dead," then you will know that from beginning to end the entire capacity is put to use. If you make up rationalizations, hesitate and ponder, then it will be impossible to see.

Chien Yuan said, "This is just where I should apply effort."

See how after his enlightenment he can speak spontaneously so extraordinarily.

Tao Wu's skull bone was golden-hued; when struck it sounded like metal.

Hsueh Tou commented, "Heavens! Heavens!" His meaning comes down on both sides.

Fu of T'ai Yuan said, "The late master's relics are still present." Naturally what he said was fitting—at once he put this loose end in place.

But tell me, what is the most essential place? How is effort applied? Haven't you heard it said that if you penetrate in one place you penetrate in a thousand, ten-thousand places all at once." If you can penetrate "I won't say, I won't say," then you cut off the tongues of everyone on earth. If you can't penetrate this, then you must study for yourself and awaken yourself. You mustn't take it easy and let the days go by—you must value the time.

#### VERSE

*Rabbits and horses have horns—*

Chop them off. How extraordinary! How fresh and new!

*Oxen and Rams have no horns.*

Chop them off. What pattern is being formed? You may fool others.

*Nary a hair, nary a wisp—*

"In the heavens and on earth, I alone am the honored one." Where will you search?

*Like mountains, like peaks.*

Where are they? Waves arising on level ground clog your nostrils.

*The golden relics still exist right now—*

Cutting off tongues, blocking throats. I put them to one side; I only fear that there won't be anyone who can recognize them.

*With white foaming waves flooding the skies, where can they be put?*

Hsueh Tou lets his move go. They're right under your feet but you miss them. They can't be put in your eyes or ears.

*There's no place to put them—*

After all. Yet Hsueh Tou has managed somewhat. But as it turns out he's sunk in a deep pit.

*Even the one who returned to the West with one shoe has lost them.<sup>b</sup>*

If the ancestral shrine is not completed, the trouble extends to the descendants. I'll hit, saying, "Then why are they here?"

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou understands how to add footnotes exceptionally well. He is a descendant of Yun Men, with the hammer and tongs to have three phrases present in every single phrase. Where it's hard to express, he explains thoroughly; the unopenable he opens up. He goes to the most crucial and essential place and produces it in verse, immediately saying, "Rabbits and horses have horns—oxen and rams have no horns." Tell me, why do rabbits and horses have horns? Why then do oxen and rams have no horns? Only if you can penetrate the preceding story (in the case) will you realize that Hsueh Tou has a way to help people.

Some mistakenly say, "Not saying is saying; having no phrases is having phrases. Though rabbits and horses have no horns, yet Hsueh Tou says they have horns. Though oxen and rams have horns, nevertheless Hsueh Tou says they don't." But this has nothing to do with it. They are far from knowing that the Ancient's thousand changes and ten thousand transformations, which manifest such supematural powers, were just to break up the ghost cave of your spirit. If you can penetrate through, it's not even worth using the word "understand."

*Rabbits and horses have horns—*

*Oxen and rams have no horns.*

*Nary a hair, nary a wisp—*

*Like mountains, like peaks.*

These four lines are like the wish-fulfilling jewel. Hsueh Tou has spit it out whole right in front of you.

The last part of the verse is all settling the case according to the facts. "The golden relics still exist right now—with white

foamy waves flooding the skies, where can they be put?" This versifies the statements of Shih Shuang and Fu of T'ai Yuan. Why is there no place to put them? "Even the one who returned to the West with one shoe has lost them." The sacred tortoise is dragging his tail—this is where Hsueh Tou turns around to help people. An Ancient said, "He just studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase." Since the relics are lost, why is that bunch still struggling with each other over them?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Once someone riding in a boat happened to drop his sword overboard; he marked the spot on the boat, but as it is also said in reference to this story, "the sword was long gone."
- b. After Bodhidharma was supposed to have died and been interred, he was allegedly seen walking back to India with one shoe in hand. When his coffin was exhumed, nothing but a single shoe was found inside. Hence this refers to Bodhidharma, the first patriarch of Ch'an in China.

# Ch'in Shan's One Arrowpoint Smashes Three Barriers

## POINTER

The Buddhas never appeared in the world—there is nothing to be given to people. The Patriarch never came from the West—he never passed on the transmission by mind. Since people of these times do not understand, they frantically search outside themselves. They are far from knowing that the One Great Matter right where they are cannot be grasped even by a thousand sages.

Right now, where do seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing, speaking and not speaking, knowing and not knowing come from? If you are unable to apprehend clearly, then try to understand inside the cave of entangling vines.<sup>a</sup> To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

Ch'an traveller Liang asked Ch'in Shan, "How is it when a single arrowhead smashes three barriers?"<sup>1</sup>

Shan said, "Bring out the lord within the barriers for me to see."<sup>2</sup>

Liang said, "So then knowing my fault I must change."<sup>3</sup>

Shan said, "Why wait any longer?"<sup>4</sup>

Liang said, "A well-shot arrow doesn't hit anywhere," and (started to) leave.<sup>5</sup> Shan said, "Come here a minute."<sup>6</sup> Liang turned his head;<sup>7</sup> Shan held him tight and said, "Leaving aside for the moment a single arrowhead smashing three barriers, let's see you shoot an arrow."<sup>8</sup> Liang hesitated,<sup>9</sup> so Shan hit him seven times and said, "I'll allow as this fellow will be doubting for thirty more years."<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. Danger! Undeniably Liang is extraordinary—he is a fierce general.
2. He comes on directly. He wants everyone to know; Mt. Chu is high, Mt. An is low.
3. He sees his opportunity and acts. He's already fallen into the secondary.
4. There's capture, there's release. When the wind moves the grass bends.
5. After all. So Liang is trying to change his plea. He strikes his second blow, but Ch'in Shan feels no pain.
6. Summoning him is easy, dispatching him is hard. What good is someone who turns his head when called?
7. As it turns out Liang couldn't hold fast. He's hit.
8. Ch'in Shan lies down in the tiger's mouth. Waves against the current. Having seen one's duty but not doing it is lack of courage.
9. As it turns out, he searches without finding. I'll hit, saying, "Too bad."
10. The imperative must be so. There's a beginning, there's an end. Ch'in Shan is correct at the beginning and correct at the end. It's Ch'in Shan who should receive this beating.

## COMMENTARY

Ch'an traveller Liang was undeniably a battle-tested general. In Ch'in Shan's hand he turned to the left and revolved to the right, bringing down his whip and flashing his stirrups. In the end, what a pity—his bow is broken, and his arrows are used up. Even so, "General Li Kuang, though he had a glorious reputation, was never enfeoffed as a noble, so it was useless."

This public case has one exit and one entry, one capture and one release. "Taking charge of the situation, he brings it up face to face; face to face, taking charge of the situation is swift." Throughout there is no falling into existence and nonexistence or gain and loss. This is called "mysterious activity." If one lacks strength, then he will stumble.

This monk too was a brave and spirited patchrobed one; he posed a question that really startles the crowd. Being an expert

teacher of our school, Ch'in Shan immediately knew where his question came down. How is it when a single arrowhead smashes the three barriers? Ch'in Shan's reply meant, "For the moment leave aside your shooting through; try to bring out the lord within the barriers for me to see." Liang's saying, "So then knowing my fault I must change," was undeniably extraordinary. Ch'in Shan said, "Why wait any longer?" See how he replied—this question of Ch'in Shan's has no gaps.

Finally Ch'an traveller Liang just said, "A well-shot arrow doesn't hit anywhere." He shook out his sleeves to go away. As soon as he saw him talking this way, Ch'in Shan immediately called out to him, "Come here a minute, Reverend."<sup>b</sup> As it turned out Liang couldn't hold fast; he turned his head back then. Ch'in Shan held him tight and said, "Leaving aside for the moment a single arrowhead smashing three barriers, let's see you shoot an arrow." When Liang hesitated, Ch'in Shan immediately struck him seven blows. After this he went on to pronounce a curse on Liang saying, "I'll allow this fellow will be doubting for thirty more years."

Followers of Ch'an these days all say, "Why didn't he hit him eight times or six times? Why just seven times? Or else why didn't he hit him immediately as he was asking him to try to shoot an arrow?" Though this seems right, in reality it isn't. For this case you must not cherish the least bit of rational calculation in your heart; you must pass beyond the words. Only then will you be able to have a way to smash the three barriers<sup>c</sup> at a single phrase and to shoot an arrow. If you keep thinking of right and wrong, you will never be able to get a grasp on it.

At that time, if this monk had been a real man, Ch'in Shan would have been in great danger too. Since Liang could not carry out the imperative, he couldn't avoid it being carried out on him. But say, after all, who is the lord within the barriers? Look at Hsueh Tou's verse:

#### VERSE

*I bring out the lord within the barriers for you—*

On target. Face to face, still you miss it. Retreat! Retreat!



*You disciples who would shoot an arrow, don't be careless!*  
 Once dead, one doesn't come back to life again. Very  
 obscure. Gone by.

*Take an eye and the ears go deaf;*  
 In the left eye half a pound. Hsueh Tou lets his move go.  
 On the left not advancing, on the right not retreating.

*Let go an ear and the eyes both go blind.*  
 In the right eye eight ounces. There's only one road. Ad-  
 vance and you fall into a pit; retreat and a ferocious tiger  
 will bite your leg.

*I can admire a single arrowpoint smashing three barriers—*  
 How is it when the entire capacity comes forth this way?  
 What is he saying? The barriers have been smashed, the  
 barriers have fallen.

*The trail of the arrow is truly clear.*  
 Dead man! Bah! I'll hit, saying, "Do you see it?"

*You don't see!*  
 A leper drags along his companions. He's creating com-  
 plications.

*Hsuan Sha had words for this:*  
 Who isn't Hsuan Sha?

*"A great adept is the primordial ancestor of mind."*  
 With one line he cuts off the flow and puts myriad  
 impulses to rest. The nostrils of the great adept are in my  
 hands. Before heaven and earth and the world existed,  
 where would you rest your body and establish your life?

#### COMMENTARY

Several of the lines of this verse draw on the words of a verse of Kuei Tsung. Since Kuei Tsung made up this verse in the old days, he was given the name Kuei Tsung ('return to the source'). Within the gate of our school this is called "talk of the source meaning."

Later Tung An heard of this case and said, "Mr. Liang was well able to shoot arrows, but in essence he didn't know how to

hit the target." There was a monk then who asked, "How can one hit the target?" An said, "Who is the lord within the barriers?" Later there was a monk who cited this to Ch'in Shan. Shan said, "Even if Mr. Liang had been this way, he still wouldn't have avoided Ch'in Shan's mouth. Although this is so, T'ung An is not good-hearted."

Hsueh Tou says, "I bring out the lord within the barriers for you." Open your eyes and you can see, close your eyes and you can see too. With form, without form—all is cut into three sections. "You disciples who would shoot an arrow, don't be careless." If you are able to shoot well, you won't be careless. If you don't shoot well, then it's obvious that you are careless.

"Take an eye and the ears go deaf; let go an ear and the eyes both go blind." Tell me, when an eye is taken, why is it nevertheless the ears that go deaf? When an ear is let go, why then is it the eyes that both go blind? You can penetrate these words only if you have no grasping or rejection; if you are grasping and rejecting, then it will be impossible to see.

"I can admire a single arrowpoint smashing three barriers—the trail of the arrow is truly clear." Ch'an traveller Liang asked, "How is it when a single arrowpoint smashes the three barriers?" and Ch'in Shan said, "Bring out the lord within the barriers for me to see." These statements and everything down to T'ung An's case at the end are all "the trail of the arrow." In the end, what is it?"

"You don't see? Hsuan Sha had words for this: 'A great adept is the primordial ancestor of mind.' " It is commonplace to take mind as the ultimate principle of the school of the Patriarchs; here though, why is the great adept still the ancestor of this mind even before heaven and earth were born? If you can thoroughly understand this time and season, only then will you be able to recognize the lord within the barriers.

"The trail of the arrow is truly clear." If you want to hit the target, there clearly is a trail behind the arrow. But say, what is the trail behind the arrow? Before you'll understand, you must apply concentrated mental effort on your own.

"A great adept is the primordial ancestor of mind." Hsuan Sha often taught his community with these words. This is from a verse of Kuei Tsung's which Hsueh Tou has wrongly attributed to Hsuan Sha. Students of today who take this mind as the ancestral source can study until Maitreya Buddha comes

down to be born here and still never understand. For one who is a great adept, even mind is still just the descendant.

"Heaven and earth not yet distinct" is already the secondary. Tell me, at just such a time, what is "before heaven and earth"?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Tangled or entangling vines is an expression colloquially meaning complications, and has been so translated. In Ch'an talk it is often used on one level to refer specifically to words, hence the public cases (*kung an*) themselves.
- b. "Reverend" used here was used sometimes by Ch'an teachers as a term of direct address, hence is not always necessary to translate, except for emphasis. In formal usage it really means teacher, so it is possible that there can be some irony in the Ch'an usage. The original Sanskrit word, *Acarya*, was transliterated into Chinese syllables instead of semantic translation; the connotations of teacher, exemplar, and guide tended in common usage to fade into a general term of respect.
- c. Nothing is specifically said about what the three barriers are; since the point seems to be the lord within the barriers, perhaps it is pointless to say anything. The form of Liang's question need not be considered totally arbitrary, however; we have seen mention, for example, of Yun Men's three phrases within a phrase, cutting off the stream, covering heaven and earth, and going along with the waves. Pai Chang said that the Buddhist Teachings all had three phases (expressed verbally and metaphorically as phrases): detachment from everything, not abiding in detachment (not seeing that there is anything really real to either grasp or reject), and not having any understanding of non-abiding (no awareness of knowledge of non-duality as such, no more delusion of subtle and extremely subtle knowledge). In the Lin Chi Ch'an school of the Southern Sung dynasty, after Yuan Wu, when the use of *kung an* as meditation themes was popular, there also was reference to three phases of "understanding" a *kung an*; seeing its intent, practical application, and transcendence. All of these designated states of attainment could be called "barriers"; probably "three barriers" means all barriers.

# Chao Chou's Stupid Oaf

## POINTER

Before you have penetrated, it all seems like a silver mountain, like an iron wall. When you have been able to penetrate, from the beginning it was your self that was the silver mountain, the iron wall.

If someone asks me, "So what?" I would just say to him, "Here, if you can reveal an action and observe an environment, occupy the essential bridge without letting profane or holy pass, this would not be beyond your inherent capacity."

If, on the other hand, you are not yet thus, observe the look of an Ancient.

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "'The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing.' What is not picking and choosing?"<sup>1</sup>

Chou said, "'In the heavens and on earth I alone am the Honored One.'"<sup>2</sup>

The monk said, "This is still picking and choosing."<sup>3</sup>

Chou said, "Stupid oaf! Where is the picking and choosing?"<sup>4</sup> The monk was speechless.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. So many people cannot swallow these iron brambles. There are many people who have doubts about this. His whole mouth is filled with frost.
2. He heaps up a pile of bones on level ground. All at once he has pierced the nostrils of patchrobed monks. A talisman hard as cast iron.

3. As it turns out he's rolled along after Chao Chou. He challenges this old fellow.
4. Mountains crumble, rocks shatter.
5. I forgive you thirty blows. His eyes open wide, his mouth is agape.

## COMMENTARY

The monk questioned Chao Chou about (the saying) "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing." The Third Patriarch's *Inscription of the Believing Heart* starts off directly with these two lines. There are quite a few people who misunderstand. How so? (According to them,) the Ultimate Path is fundamentally without difficulties, but also without anything that's not difficult; it's just that it's only adverse to picking and choosing. If you understand in this fashion, in ten thousand years you won't even see it in dreams.

Chao Chou often used this saying to question people. This monk reversed this by taking this saying to question him. If you look to the words, then this monk does after all startle heaven and shake the earth. If it is not in the words, then what? You must be able to turn this little key before it will open. To grab the tiger's whiskers, you must be able to do it on your own abilities. Heedless of the mortal danger, this monk dared to grab the tiger's whiskers, so he said, "This is still picking and choosing." Chao Chou immediately blocked off his mouth by saying, "Stupid oaf! Where is the picking and choosing?" If the monk had asked someone else, he would have seen him flustered and confused. But what could he do about this old fellow who was an adept? Chao Chou moved where it was impossible to move, turned around where it was impossible to turn around.

If you can penetrate all evil and poisonous words and phrases, even down to a thousand differences and ten thousand forms, then all conventional fabrications will be the excellent flavor of purified ghee. If you can get to where you touch reality, then you will see Chao Chou's naked heart in its entirety.

"Stupid oaf" is a country expression of the people of Fu Chou, to revile people for being without intelligence. When the monk said, "This is still picking and choosing," Chao Chou said, "Stupid oaf! Where is the picking and choosing?" The eye

of teachers of our school must be thus, like the golden winged Garuda bird parting the ocean waters to seize a dragon directly and swallow it.

# VERSE

*Deep as the ocean,*

What measure is this? The abyssal source is impossible to fathom. This still hasn't got a half of it.

*Firm as a mountain.*

Who can shake him? This is still only halfway there.

*A mosquito sports in the fierce wind of the sky,*

There are others like this. After all, he didn't assess his strength; he certainly didn't measure himself.

*An ant tries to shake an iron pillar.*

There's no different dirt in the same hole. He's out of touch. You're a fellow student with him.

*Picking, choosing—*

Carrying water to sell at the river. What is he saying? Chao Chou has come.

*A cloth drum under the eaves.<sup>a</sup>*

It is already present before any words. They're buried in the same pit, as numerous as hemp and millet seeds. I hit, saying, "I'll block off your throats."

# COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou explains Chao Chou's two lines in the case by saying, "Deep as the ocean, firm as a mountain." The monk said, "This is still picking and choosing," so Hsueh Tou says that this monk is just like a mosquito playing in a gale, like an ant trying to shake an iron pillar. Hsueh Tou praises this monk's great bravery. Why? This "the ultimate path has no difficulties" is something superior people use, yet this monk dared to talk in this way. Chao Chou did not let him go; he immediately said, "Stupid oaf! Where is the picking and choosing?" Isn't this a fierce wind, an iron pillar?

"Picking, choosing—a cloth drum hung under the eaves." At the end Hsueh Tou picks this up to bring you to life. If you recognize it clearly, then you are carrying the whole thing yourself. What's the reason? Haven't you heard it said that if you want to attain intimate understanding, don't use a question to ask. That is why "the cloth drum under the eaves".

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. A cloth drum makes no sound when beaten; just so, Tenkei explains, asking questions ('beating the drum') will never yield the real answer. Ultimately all discrimination, even between discrimination and clarity, is beating a cloth drum; the sound disappears in the emptiness of space.

# Chao Chou Can't Explain

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "'The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing'—isn't this a cliché for people of these times?"<sup>1</sup>

Chou said, "Once someone asked me, and I really couldn't explain for five years."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. A double case. This too is a point which makes people doubt. Treading on a scale beam, hard as iron. There's still this one. Don't judge others on the basis of yourself.
2. Honest speech is better than a red face. A monkey eats a caterpillar, a mosquito bites an iron ox.

## COMMENTARY

Chao Chou usually didn't use blows or shouts; his action went beyond blows and shouts. This monk's question was also very special; it would have been hard for anyone but Chao Chou to answer him. Since Chao Chou was an adept, he just said to him, "Once someone asked me, and I really couldn't explain for five years." The question towered up like a mile-high wall, and the answer didn't make light of it. Just understand it this way and it's right here. If you don't understand, then don't make rational calculations.

Haven't you heard how when the man of the Path Tsung of T'ou Tzu was the scribe in Hsueh Tou's community, Hsueh Tou had him immerse himself in "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties; just avoid picking and choosing." Thereby Tsung had an awakening. One day Hsueh Tou asked him, "What is



the meaning of "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties; just avoid picking and choosing?" Tsung said, "Animal, animal." Later he dwelt in seclusion on Mt. T'ou Tzu. Whenever he went to serve as an abbot, he wrapped his straw sandals and his scriptural texts in his robe. A monk asked him "What is your family style, Wayfarer?" Tsung said, "Straw sandals wrapped in a robe." The monk said, "What does this mean?" Tsung said, "T'ung Ch'eng (the neighboring city) is under my bare feet."

Thus it is said, "Making offerings to the Buddha is not a matter of a lot of incense." If you can penetrate through and escape, then letting go or holding on rest with oneself. Since this case is one question and one answer, clear and perfectly obvious, why then did Chao Chou say that he couldn't explain? But tell me, is this a cliché for people of these times or not? Did Chao Chou answer him inside or outside the nest of cliché.<sup>a</sup> You must realize that this matter isn't in words and phrases. If there's a fellow who penetrates the bone and penetrates the marrow, whose faith is thoroughgoing, then he's like a dragon reaching the water, like a tiger taking to the mountains.

#### VERSE

*The Elephant King trumpets*

Noblest of the noble, richest of the rich. Who isn't awed?  
Good news.

*The Lion roars.*

An expert among experts. The hundred beasts' brains  
burst. A good route to enter by.

*Flavorless talk*

When we're reviling each other, I'll let you lock jaws with  
me. It's like an iron spike; what place is there to bite into?  
He couldn't explain for five years and more; carrying all  
China in a single-leaf boat, far in the distant flats, waves  
are rising; who knows that there is yet another, better  
realm of thought?

*Blocks off people's mouths.*

When we're spitting on each other, I'll let you spray me  
with slobber. Ha! What are you saying, Reverend?

*South, north, east, west—*

Is there? Is there? In the heavens and on earth. Heavens!  
Heavens!

*The raven flies, the rabbit runs.*

From past and from present. Buried alive all at once.

#### COMMENTARY

Chao Chou said, "Once someone asked me, and I really couldn't explain for five years." This is like "The Elephant King trumpets, the Lion roars. Flavorless talk blocks off people's mouths. South, north, east, west—the raven flies, the rabbit runs." If Hsueh Tou didn't have the last word, where else would he have come from? Since "the raven flies, the rabbit runs,"<sup>b</sup> tell me, where do Chao Chou, Hsueh Tou, and I end up?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. In literary Chinese, the word 'nest' is used to refer to a cliché; that is, something people stick to. It is used in the same way in Ch'an to refer to words and sayings which have become cliché, and generally to any rut or habit in which one 'nests' complacently, any point on which one depends.
- b. The raven and rabbit also refer to the sun and moon; their flight is the passage of terrestrial time.

# Chao Chou's Why Not Quote It Fully?

## POINTER

He includes the heavens and encompasses the earth, going beyond holy and profane. On the tips of the hundred weeds he points out the wondrous mind of nirvana; within the forest of shields and spears he decisively establishes the lifeline of patchrobed monks.

But tell me, endowed with whose power, can one get to be this way? As a test I cite this: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing.<sup>1</sup> As soon as there are words and speech, this is picking and choosing."<sup>2</sup> So how do you help people, Teacher?"<sup>3</sup>

Chou said, "Why don't you quote this saying in full?"<sup>4</sup> The monk said, "I only remember up to here."<sup>5</sup>

Chou said, "It's just this: 'This Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing.'"<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. Again it's hauled out. What is he saying?
2. He takes a mouthful of frost.
3. He presses this old fellow. Gaa!
4. The thief is a small man, but his wisdom surpasses a lord's. Chao Chou is a thief who steals in broad daylight. He's riding the thief's horse in pursuit of the thief.
5. Two fellows playing with a mud ball. The monk has encountered a thief. When immobile it's hard to be a worthy opponent for Chao Chou.

6. In the end it's up to this old fellow. The monk has his eyes snatched away; he's been overtaken.

### COMMENTARY

Chao Chou saying, "It's just this: 'The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing,'" is like a stone-struck spark, like a flash of lightning. Capturing and releasing, killing and giving life—he has such independent mastery. All over they said that Chao Chou had eloquence beyond the common crowd.

Chao Chou often taught his community with this speech, saying, "The Ultimate Path has no difficulties—just avoid picking and choosing. As soon as there are words and speech, 'this is picking and choosing,' 'this is clarity.' This old monk does not abide within clarity; do you still preserve anything or not?" Once there was a monk who asked, "Since you do not abide in clarity, what is to be preserved?" Chou said, "I don't know either." The monk said, "Since you don't know, Teacher, why do you say you don't abide in clarity?" Chou said, "It's enough just to ask about this matter. Now bow and withdraw."

Later a monk picked on his gap and went to question him; this monk's questioning was undeniably extraordinary, but nevertheless it was just mental activity. Someone other than Chao Chou would have been unable to handle this monk. But what could he do? Chao Chou was an adept and immediately said, "Why don't you quote this saying in full?"

This monk too understood how to turn himself around and show his mettle; he said, "I only remember up to here." It seems just like an arrangement. Directly after the monk spoke, Chao Chou immediately answered him; he didn't need any calculations. An Ancient said of this, "Continuity is indeed very difficult." Chao Chou distinguished dragons from snakes and differentiated right from wrong; this goes back to his being an adept in his own right. Chao Chou snatched this monk's eyes away without running afoul of his sharp point. Without relying on calculations, he was spontaneously exactly appropriate.

It's wrong to say either that he had words or didn't have words; nor will it do to say that his answer neither had nor didn't have words. Chao Chou left behind all the permutations of logic. Why? If one discusses this matter, it is like sparks struck from stone, like flashing lightning. Only if you set your eyes on it quickly can you see it. If you hesitate and vascillate you won't avoid losing your body and life.

# VERSE

*Water poured on cannot wet,*

What are you saying? Too deep and far off. What is there to discuss?

*Wind blowing cannot enter.*

It's like empty space. Hard, impervious. Address your plea to the sky.

*The tiger prowls, the dragon walks;*

He gains independence; he's outstanding.

*Ghosts howl, spirits wail.*

Everyone cover your ears! When the wind moves, the grasses bow. Are you not a fellow-student of theirs, Reverend?

*His head is three feet long—I wonder who it is!*

A strange being. A sage from where? Do you see? Do you see?

*Standing on one foot, he answers back without speaking.*

Bah! He draws back his head and lets his move go. Mountain ghost? He shouldn't be let go, so I strike.

# COMMENTARY

"Water poured on cannot wet, wind blowing cannot enter. The tiger prowls, the dragon walks; ghosts howl, spirits wail." There's no place for you to chew on. These four lines versify Chao Chou's answer, which is indeed like a dragon galloping, like a tiger charging. This monk just got an embarrassing situa-

tion. Not only this monk; even the ghosts howl, even the spirits wail. It's like when the wind moves, the grasses bow down.

Of the final two lines, it could be said, "One son has intimately understood." "His head is three feet long—I wonder who it is? Standing on one foot, he answers back without speaking." Haven't you heard how a monk asked an Ancient Worthy, "What is the Buddha?" The Ancient Worthy said, "His head is three feet long, his neck two inches long." Hsueh Tou draws on this to use in the verse. I wonder, do you people recognize him? Not even I know him. All at once Hsueh Tou has fully depicted Chao Chou. The real one has always been within: all of you must investigate carefully and try to see it.

# Yun Men's Staff Changes into a Dragon

## POINTER

Buddhas and sentient beings—fundamentally there is no difference between them. Mountains and rivers and one's own self—how could there be any distinction? Why then is it all divided into two sides?

Even if you can set words turning and occupy the essential bridge, it still won't do to let go. If you don't let go, the whole great earth isn't worth grasping. But what is the place to set words turning? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

Yun Men showed his staff to the assembly and said,<sup>1</sup> "The staff has changed into a dragon<sup>2</sup> and swallowed the universe.<sup>3</sup> Mountains, rivers, the great earth—where are they to be found?"<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. He exposes or transforms according to the occasion. The single-edged sword that kills people, the double-edged sword that brings people to life. He's snatched your eyeballs away.
2. What's the use of so much talk? What's the use of changing?
3. The world's patchrobed monks cannot preserve their lives. Did he block off your throats? Reverend, where will you go to settle your body and establish your life?
4. In the ten directions there are no walls, on the four sides there are no gates. East, west, south, north, the four intermediate points, above, below. How will you handle this one?

## COMMENTARY

As for Yun Men's saying, "The staff has changed into a dragon and swallowed the universe. Where are the mountains, rivers, and earth to be found?" If you say it exists, then you are blind; if you say it doesn't exist, then you are dead. Do you see where Yun Men helped people? Bring the staff back to me!

People these days do not understand where Yun Men stood alone and revealed. Instead they say that he went to form to explain mind, that he relied on things to reveal principle. But old Shakyamuni couldn't have not known this theory as he taught the Dharma for forty-nine years; why then did he also need to hold up the flower for Kashyapa's smile? This old fellow caused confusion saying, "I have the treasury of the eye of the correct teaching, the wondrous mind of nirvana—these I pass on to MahaKashyapa." Why was there still a need for the specially transmitted mind seal? Given that all of you are guests in the house of the ancestral teachers, do you understand this specially transmitted mind?

If there is a single thing in your breast, then mountains, rivers, and the great earth appear in profusion before you; if there isn't a single thing in your breast, then outside there is not so much as a fine hair. How can you talk about principle and knowledge fusing, about objective world and mind merging? What's the reason? When one is understood, all are understood; when one is clear, all are clear.

Ch'ang Sha said, "People studying the Path don't know the real, because they've always given recognition to their cognizing mind; this, the basis of countless aeons of births and deaths, fools call the original person." If you suddenly smash the shadowy world of the heaps and elements of life so that body and mind are one likeness and there is nothing else outside your body, you still haven't attained the other half. How can you talk about going to form to reveal the mind, using things to demonstrate principle?

An Ancient said, "As soon as one atom of dust arises, the whole world is contained therein." But say, which atom of dust is this? If you can know this atom of dust, then you can know the staff. As soon as Yun Men picks up his staff, we immediately see his unconfined marvelous activity. Such talk is



already a mass of entangling vines, complications; how much the more so is transforming the staff into a dragon! Librarian Ch'ing said, "Has there ever been such talk in the five thousand and forty-eight volumes of the canon?" Every time he turned to his staff, Yun Men brought out the great function of his whole capacity and helped people in a way that was leaping with life.

Pa Chiao said, "If you have a staff, I'll give you a staff; if you have no staff, I'll take your staff away."

Yung Chia said, "This is not an empty exhibition displaying form; it is the actual traces of the Tathagata's precious staff."

Long ago in the time of Dipamkara Buddha, the (future) Tathagata (Shakyamuni) spread his hair to cover some mud for that Buddha. Dipamkara said, "A temple should be built here." Also present then was an elder who thereupon set up a blade of grass right there and said, "The temple has been built." All of you tell me, where is this scene to be found?

The ancestral teacher Hsueh Tou said, "At a blow, experience it; at a shout, receive it rightly." But tell me, receive what rightly? Supposing there's someone who asks, "What is the staff?" Shouldn't you turn a backflip? Shouldn't you clap your hands? All of this would be giving play to your spirits, and has nothing to do with it.

#### VERSE

*The staff swallows the universe—*

What is he saying? The staff is only used for beating dogs.

*He vainly talks of peach blossoms floating on the rushing waves.*

Make an opening upwards and all the thousand sages will stand downwind. It's not a matter of grasping clouds and seizing fog. Being able to say it a thousand or ten thousand times isn't as good as catching it in your hand once.

*For those with tails burnt off, it's not a matter of grasping clouds and seizing fog;*

I just look to the right and to the left of this. It's just a stick of dry firewood.

*Why should the exhausted ones necessarily lose their courage and spirit?*

Everyone's temper is like a king's. It's just that you are far far away. What will you do about being scared?

*I have picked it up—*

Thanks for being so compassionate; you're kindhearted as an old lady.

*Do you hear or not?*

You can't avoid falling into the weeds. Why hear?

*One simply must be completely free and at ease—*

Part-eaten soup, spoiled food. Where does the universe come from?

*Stop any further mixed up confusion.*

One who quotes this rule has already broken it. It's already on your head. I strike and say, "It won't do to let go."

*With seventy-two blows I'm still letting you off easy—*

I've never carried out this imperative, but if you are going to act according to the imperative, it's lucky you found me.

*Even with one hundred and fifty it's hard to forgive you.*

A just order must be carried out. How could it only be this many? Even if he gave three thousand blows in the morning and eight hundred blows in the evening, what good would it do?

*Master Hsueh Tou suddenly picked up his staff and came down from his seat; all at once the great assembly scattered and fled.*

Why does Hsueh Tou have a dragon's head but a snake's tail?

#### COMMENTARY

Yun Men helps people by a circuitous path; Hsueh Tou helps people by a direct shortcut. That's why Hsueh Tou discards the transformation into a dragon; he doesn't need such talk, just "the staff swallows the universe." Hsueh Tou's great intent is to have people avoid fanciful interpretations. He goes on to say,

"He vainly talks of peach blossoms floating on the rushing waves." There's no further need for transformations into dragons. At the Gate of Yu there's a three-level rapids; every year by the third month when the peach blossoms bloom and the waves rise, those fish who can go against the current and leap past the rapids change into dragons. Hsueh Tou says even though they change into dragons, this too is still vain talk.

"For those with tails burnt off it's not a matter of grasping clouds and seizing fog." When fish pass through the Gate of Yu a celestial fire burns their tails; they grab the clouds, seize the fog, and depart. Hsueh Tou means that though they change into dragons, it still isn't a matter of grabbing clouds and seizing fog. "Why should the exhausted ones necessarily lose their courage and spirit?" The introduction to Ch'ing Liang's commentary on the Avatamsaka scripture says, "Even bodhisattvas who have accumulated virtuous conduct gasp for breath at the Gate of Yu." His overall meaning is to explain that the realm of the Avatamsaka Flower Garland Cosmos<sup>a</sup> is not something mastered by small virtue or small knowledge; it's like the fish trying to pass through the Dragon Gate of Yu, where those who cannot pass through fail and fall back. They lie in the sand shoals of the dead water, exhausted and gasping. Hsueh Tou means that once they fail and fall back, they always lose their courage and spirit.

"I have picked it up—do you hear or not?" Again he adds footnotes; all at once he's swept it clean for you. All of you "simply must be completely free and at ease—stop any further mixed up confusion." If you go on with mixed up confusion, you have lost the staff.

"With seventy-two blows I'm still letting you off easy—even with a hundred and fifty it's hard to forgive you." Why has Hsueh Tou discarded the heavy for the light? An Ancient said, "Seventy-two blows doubled makes one hundred and fifty." These days people misunderstand and just calculate numerically and say, "It should be seventy-five blows; why is it instead just seventy-two blows?" How far they are from knowing that the Ancient's meaning was beyond the words. Thus it is said, "This matter is not in words and phrases." Hsueh Tou drew on this to use in order to avoid people later on trying to rationalize. Even if you're truly free and at ease, you still rightly deserve to be given seventy-two blows—this is still

letting you off easy. Even if you're not free and at ease like this at all, it would be hard to let you go with one hundred and fifty.

Hsueh Tou had completed his verse all at once, yet he picked up his staff again to help some more. Nevertheless, there wasn't even one with blood under his skin.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Avatamsaka (Hua-Yen, Kegon) scripture is a major Greater Vehicle Buddhist scripture. The name, which means flower garland or ornament, refers to myriad religious practices, likened to flowers, adorning the realm which is produced as a result of practices in the causal state. It also refers to the representation of myriad qualities and states of being 'adorning' the worlds and universes of the cosmos. In this cosmos, all realms contain infinite realms, ad infinitum, all mutually reflecting and dependent on each other and a moment of thought. Many Ch'an masters were familiar with the Avatamsaka scripture; Tsung-mi, a successor of the Ho-tse line of Southern Ch'an, was also considered the Fifth Patriarch of the Hua-Yen school of Buddhism in China.

# Feng Hsueh's One Atom of Dust

## POINTER

To set up the Banner of the Teaching and establish its fundamental message is a matter for a genuine master of the school. To judge dragons and snakes, distinguish the initiate from the naive, one must be an accomplished teacher. As for discussing killing and giving life on the edge of a sword, discerning what is appropriate for the moment with a staff, this I leave aside for the moment; just tell me in one phrase how you will assess the matter of occupying the heartland singlehandedly. To test, I cite this:

## CASE

Feng Hsueh, giving a talk, said,<sup>1</sup> "If you set up a single atom of dust,<sup>2</sup> the nation flourishes;<sup>3</sup> if you do not set up a single atom of dust,<sup>4</sup> the nation perishes."<sup>5</sup>

Hsueh Tou raised his staff and said,<sup>6</sup> "Are there any patch-robed monks who will live together and die together?"<sup>7</sup>

## NOTES

1. He rouses clouds and brings rain. He wants to be host and be guest.
2. "I am king of all things and the autonomous master of all things." Clusters of flowers, clusters of brocade.<sup>a</sup>
3. This is not the business of his house.
4. He sweeps away the tracks and obliterates the traces; having lost his eyes, his nostrils are gone too.
5. Everywhere light shines. What is the use of the nation? This is entirely the business of his house.
6. One must stand like a mile-high wall to accomplish this. Bodhidharma has come.

7. Return the words to me. Although they are right, he wants to even out what is not even. It is necessary to deal with Hsueh Tou to accomplish it. But do you know? If you know, I admit that you are autonomous and free. If you do not know, you get hit three thousand times in the morning, eight hundred times in the evening.

### COMMENTARY

As Feng Hsueh said to his assembly, "If you set up a single atom of dust, the nation flourishes; if you don't set up a single atom of dust, the nation perishes." Now tell me, is it right to set up an atom of dust, or is it right not to set up an atom of dust? When you get here, your great function must become manifest before you'll understand. That is why (Feng Hsueh) said, "Even if you can grasp it before it is spoken of, still this is remaining in the shell, wandering in limitation; even if you thoroughly penetrate it at a single phrase, you still won't avoid insane views on the way."

He was a venerable adept in the lineage of Lin Chi; he directly used his own provisions; "If you set up a single atom of dust, the nation flourishes, and the old peasants frown." The meaning lies in the fact that to establish a nation and stabilize the country, it is necessary to rely on crafty ministers and valiant generals; after that, the Unicorn appears, the Pheonix soars—these are the auspicious signs of great peace. How could the people of three-family villages know there are such things? When you do not set up a single atom of dust, the nation perishes, the wind blows chill; why do the old peasants come out and sing hallelujah? Just because the nation has perished. In the (Ts'ao-) Tung lineage, they call this the point of transformation: there is no more Buddha, nor sentient beings; no affirmation, no negation, no good, no bad—it is beyond sound and echo, track or trace. That is why it is said, "Although gold dust is precious, in the eye it obstructs vision."<sup>b</sup> And it is said, "Gold dust is a cataract on the eye; the jewel in one's robe is the defilement of the Dharma."<sup>c</sup> Even one's own spirit is not important; who are the Buddhas and Patriarchs?" Piercing and penetrating supernatural powers and their wondrous action would not be considered exceptional; when he gets here, with

his patched robe covering his head, myriad concerns cease—at this time, the mountain monk does not understand anything at all. If one were to speak any more of mind, speak of nature, speak of the profound, speak of the wondrous, it would not be any use at all. What is the reason? "He has his own mountain spirit realm."

Nan Ch'uan said to his community, "The seven hundred eminent monks on Huang Mei were all men who understood the Buddha Dharma. They did not get his Robe and Bowl; there was only workman Lu who did not understand the Buddha Dharma—that is why he got his robe and bowl."<sup>d</sup>

He also said, "The Buddhas of the past, present, and future do not know what is; but cats and oxen do know what is." The old peasants either frown or sing, but tell me how you will understand? And tell me, what eye do they possess, that they are like this? You should know that in front of the old peasants' gates no ordinances are posted.

Hsueh Tou, having raised both sides, finally lifts up his staff and says, "Are there any patchrobed monks who will live together and die together?" At that time, if there had been a fellow who could come forth and utter a phrase, alternately acting as guest and host, he would have avoided this old fellow Hsueh Tou's pointing to himself in the end.

#### VERSE

*The old peasants may not unfurrow their brows,  
There is someone three thousand miles away. Delicious  
food is not for a satisfied man to eat.*

*But for now I hope that the nation establishes a sturdy foundation.*

The one song of great peace, everyone knows. When you want to go, go; when you want to stay, stay. Heaven, earth, the whole world is one gate of liberation. How will you establish it?

*Crafty ministers, valiant generals—where are they now?*

Are there any? Are there? The land is broad, the people are few, and rarely is anyone met with. But do not point to yourself.

*Ten thousand miles' pure wind, only I know.*

If there is no one by your side, who will you have sweep the ground? Here's another cloud-dwelling saint.

#### COMMENTARY

Previously he quoted both sides; here, instead, he just raises one side and lets the other go. He cuts down the long and adds to the short, abandons the heavy and goes along with the light. That is why he says, "The old peasants may not unfurrow their brows, but for now I hope the nation establishes a sturdy foundation; where are the crafty ministers and valiant generals now?" When Hsueh Tou lifted up his staff and said, "Are there any patchrobed monks who will live together and die together?" This was just like saying, "Are there still any crafty ministers and valiant generals?" In one gulp he has swallowed everyone completely. That is why I say that the land is broad, the people few, and rarely is anyone met with. Are there any who know? Come forth and be buried in the same pit. "Ten thousand miles' pure wind, only I know." This is where Hsueh Tou points to himself.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Clusters of flowers and brocade refer to spring and autumn, which in turn symbolize birth and death.
- b. Gold dust in the eyes symbolizes attachment to the Buddha Dharma, the teaching of enlightenment; the Diamond Cutter scripture says that even the Dharma should be abandoned, let alone what is not Dharma.
- c. The jewel in one's robe symbolizes Buddha-nature, the potential of enlightenment inherent in everyone; the defilement of the Dharma means attachment to the Dharma, maintaining a sense of attainment; pride, however subtle, in one's faith, practice, or accomplishment.
- d. Huang Mei was the mountain abode of Hung Jen, the Fifth Patriarch of Ch'an in China; workman Lu was an illiterate woodcutter who came to the community of Hung Jen and was later chosen as the latter's successor. After fifteen years travelling any-



mously with a band of hunters, he "appeared" in south China, with the robe and bowl, signifying the inheritance of the Dharma, of the Fifth Patriarch. He was known as Hui Neng (his name), Ts'ao Ch'i (the name of the place he lived as a teacher), and workman Lu; he was the sixth and perhaps most illustrious patriarch of Ch'an.

# Yun Men's Within There Is a Jewel

## POINTER

By means of the knowledge that has no teacher, he produces the marvelous function of non-doing; by means of unconditional compassion, he acts unasked as an excellent friend. In one phrase there is killing, there is giving life; in one act there is releasing, there is holding. Tell me, who has ever been like this? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

Yun Men said to the community, "Within heaven and earth,<sup>1</sup> through space and time,<sup>2</sup> there is a jewel,<sup>3</sup> hidden inside the mountain of form.<sup>4</sup> Pick up a lamp and go into the Buddha-hall;<sup>5</sup> take the triple gate<sup>a</sup> and bring it on the lamp."<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. The land is broad, the people few. The six directions cannot contain it.
2. Stop making your living in a ghost cave. You already missed it.
3. Where is it? Light is produced. I only fear that you'll seek it in a ghost cave.
4. A confrontation. Check!
5. It still can be discussed.
6. Great Master Yun Men is right, but nevertheless difficult to understand. He seems to have gotten somewhere. If you examine thoroughly, you will not avoid the smell of shit.

## COMMENTARY

Yun Men says, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, there is a jewel, hidden in the mountain of form." Now

tell me, is Yun Men's meaning in the "fishing pole,"<sup>b</sup> or is the meaning in the lamp? These lines are paraphrased from a treatise of Seng Chao, Master of the Teachings, called *Jewel Treasury*; Yun Men brought them up to teach his community.

In the time of the Latter Ch'in, Seng Chao was in the Garden of Freedom composing his treatise. When he was copying the old *Vimalakirtinirdesa* scripture he realized that Chuang-tzu and Lao-tzu had still not exhausted the marvel; Chao then paid obeisance to Kumarajiva as his teacher. He also called on the bodhisattva Buddhahadra at the Tile Coffin Temple, who had transmitted the Mind Seal from the Twenty-seventh Patriarch (Prajnatara) in India. Chao entered deeply into the inner sanctum. One day Chao ran into trouble; when he was about to be executed, he asked for seven days' reprieve, during which time he composed the treatise *Jewel Treasury*.

So Yun Men cited four phrases from that treatise to teach his community. The main idea is "how can you take a priceless jewel and conceal it in the heaps and elements?" The words spoken in the treatise are all in accord with the talk of our school. Have you not seen how Ching Ch'ing asked Ts'ao Shan, "How is it when in the principle of pure emptiness ultimately there is no body?" Ts'ao Shan said, "The principle being like this, what about phenomena?" Ch'ing said, "As is principle, so are phenomena." Shan said, "You can fool me, one person, but what can you do about the eyes of all the sages?" Ch'ing said, "Without the eyes of all the sages, how could you know it is not so?" Shan said, "Officially, not even a needle is admitted; privately, even a cart and horse can pass."

That is why it was said, "Within heaven and earth, in space and time, there is a jewel, hidden in the mountain of form." The great meaning of this is to show that everyone is fully endowed, each individual is perfectly complete. Yun Men thus brought it up to show his community; it is totally obvious—he couldn't go on and add interpretations for you like a lecturer. But he is compassionate and adds a footnote for you, saying, "Pick up a lamp and go into the Buddha-hall; bring the triple gate on the lamp."

Now tell me, when Yun Men speaks this way, what is his meaning? Have you not seen how an Ancient said, "The true nature of ignorance is identical to Buddhahood; the empty body of illusion is identical to the body of reality." It is also said, "See the Buddha mind right in the ordinary mind."

The "mountain of form" is the four gross elements and five heaps (which constitute human life).<sup>c</sup> "Within there is a jewel, hidden in the mountain of form." That is why it is said, "All Buddhas are in the mind; deluded people go seeking outside. Though within they embosom a priceless jewel, they do not know it, and let it rest there all their lives." It is also said, "The Buddha-nature clearly manifests, but the sentient beings dwelling in form hardly see it. If one realizes that sentient beings have no self, how does his own face differ from a Buddha's face?" "The mind is the original mind; the face is the face born of woman—the Rock of Ages may be moved, but here there is no change."

Some people acknowledge this radiant shining spirituality as the jewel; but they cannot make use of it, and they do not realize its wondrousness. Therefore they cannot set it in motion and cannot bring it out in action. An Ancient said, "Reaching an impasse, then change; having changed, then you can pass through."

"Pick up a lamp and head into the Buddha-hall"; if it is a matter of ordinary sense, this can be fathomed—but can you fathom "bring the triple gate on the lamp"? Yun Men has broken up emotional discrimination, intellectual ideas, gain, loss, affirmation, and negation, all at once for you. Hsueh Tou has said, "I like the freshly established devices of Shao Yang (Yun Men); all his life he pulled out nails and drew out pegs for others." He also said, "I do not know how many sit on the chair of rank; but the sharp sword cutting away causes others' admiration." When he said, "Pick up a lamp and go into the Buddha-hall," this one phrase has already cut off completely; yet, "bring the triple gate on the lamp." If you discuss this matter, it is like sparks struck from stone, like the flash of a lightning bolt. Yun Men said, "If you would attain, just seek a way of entry; Buddhas numerous as atoms are under your feet, the three treasures of the holy teachings are on your tongues; (but) this is not as good as being enlightened. Monks, do not think falsely; sky is sky, earth is earth, mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers, monks are monks, lay people are lay people." After a long pause he said, "Bring me the immovable mountain before you." Then a monk came forth and asked, "How is it when a student sees that mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers?" Yun Men drew a line with his hand and

said, "Why is the triple gate going from here?" He feared you would die, so he said, "When you know, it is the superb flavor of ghee; if you do not know, instead it becomes poison."

This is why it is said, "When completely thoroughly understood, there is nothing to understand; the most abstruse profundity of the mystery is still to be scorned."

Hsueh Tou again brought it up and said, "Within heaven and earth, through space and time, therein is a jewel; it lies hidden in the mountain of form. It is hung on a wall; for nine years Bodhidharma did not dare to look at it straight on. If any patch-robed monk wants to see it now, I will hit him right on the spine with my staff."<sup>d</sup> See how these self-possessed teachers of our school never use any actual doctrine to tie people up. Hsuan Sha said, "Though you try to enmesh him in a trap, he doesn't consent to stay; though you call after him, he doesn't turn his head. Even though he is like this, still he is a sacred tortoise dragging his tail."

#### VERSE

*Look! Look!*

Set your eyes on high. Why look? A black dragon admires  
a gem.

*On the ancient embankment, who holds the fishing pole!*

Alone, quite alone; stolid, quite stolid. Hsueh Tou draws  
his bow after the thief has gone. If you see jowls on the  
back of someone's head, don't have anything to do with  
him.

*Clouds roll on.*

Cut them off. A hundred layers, a thousand levels. A  
greasy hat and stinking shirt.

*The water, vast and boundless—*

Left and right it goes, blocking in front and supporting in  
back.

*The white flowers in the moonlight, you must see for yourself.*

When you see them, you'll go blind. If you can com-  
prehend Yun Men's words, then you will see Hsueh Tou's  
last phrase.

## COMMENTARY

If you can comprehend Yun Men's words, then you will see how Hsueh Tou helps people. He goes to the last two phrases of Yun Men's address to the community and there gives you a footnote saying, "Look! Look!" If you thereupon make raising your eyebrows and glinting your eyes your understanding,<sup>e</sup> you are out of touch.

An Ancient said, "The spiritual light shines alone, far transcending the senses; the essential substance is manifest, real and eternal. It is not captured in written letters. The nature of mind has no defilement; it is basically naturally perfectly complete. Just get rid of delusive clings and merge with the Buddha that is as is." If you just go to raising your eyebrows and glinting your eyes and sit there forever, how will you be able to transcend the senses?

Hsueh Tou is saying, "Look! Look!" Yun Men appears to be on an ancient embankment holding a fishing pole; the clouds are rolling and the water is vast and boundless. The bright moon reflects white flowers, and white flowers reflect the bright moon. At this moment, tell me, what realm is this? If you can perceive it immediately and directly, the former and the latter phrases are just like one phrase.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The triple gate is the main gate of a monastery; usually it comprises three gates, hence the name, but it is called the triple gate even if there is only one. It is also called the "mountain gate," since monasteries were referred to as "mountains" even if they were not actually so situated. Many Ch'an monasteries, especially in the earlier days, were actually in the mountains, hence the name.
- b. See Hsueh Tou's verse; Yun Men's saying is likened to a "fishing pole." The idea of "fishing" as one of the strategies of a teaching Ch'an master has been met with several times in this book.
- c. The four gross elements are earth, air, fire, and water; the five heaps are form, sensation, perception, synergies, and consciousness. These classifications represent the elements of existence in general, of human life in particular. The analysis of the human

being into five 'heaps' is to show that there is no real self or soul, no individual self-subsistent entity.

- d. This is from the *Hsueh Tou Hou Lu*, "Later Record of Hsueh Tou".
- e. Tenkei says this means making a show of meditational effort.

# Nan Ch'uan Kills a Cat

## POINTER

Where the road of ideation cannot reach, that is just right to bring to attention; where verbal explanation cannot reach, you must set your eyes on it quickly. If your thunder rolls and comets fly, then you can overturn lakes and topple mountains. Is there anyone in the crowd who can manage this? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

At Nan Ch'uan's place one day the (monks of) the eastern and western halls were arguing about a cat.<sup>1</sup> When Nan Ch'uan saw this, he then held up the cat and said, "If you can speak, then I will not kill it."<sup>2</sup> No one in the community replied;<sup>3</sup> Nan Ch'uan cut the cat into two pieces.<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. It's not just today that they're haggling together. This is a case of degeneracy.
2. When the true imperative goes into effect, the ten directions are subdued. This old fellow has the capability to distinguish dragons from snakes.
3. What a pity to let him go. A bunch of lacquer tubs—what are they worth? Phoney Ch'an followers are as plentiful as hemp and millet.
4. How quick! How quick! If he hadn't acted like this, they would all be fellows playing with a mud ball. He draws the bow after the thief has gone. Already this is secondary; he should have been hit before he even picked it up.



## COMMENTARY

An accomplished master of our school: see his movement, stillness, his going out and entering in. Tell me, what was his inner meaning? This story about killing the cat is widely discussed in monasteries everywhere. Some say that the holding up is it; some say it lies in the cutting. But actually these bear no relation to it at all. If he had not held it up, then would you still spin out all sorts of rationalizations? You are far from knowing that this Ancient had the eye to judge heaven and earth, and he had the sword to settle heaven and earth.

Now you tell me, after all, who was it that killed the cat? Just when Nan Ch'uan held it up and said, "If you can speak, then I won't kill it," at that moment, if there were suddenly someone who could speak, tell me, would Nan Ch'uan have killed it or not? This is why I say, "When the true imperative goes into effect, the ten directions are subdued." Stick your head out beyond the heavens and look; who's there?

The fact is that at that time he really did not kill. This story does not lie in killing or not killing. This matter is clearly known; it is so distinctly clear. It is not to be found in emotions or opinions; if you go searching in emotions and opinions, then you turn against Nan Ch'uan. Just see it right on the edge of the knife. If it exists, all right; if it does not exist, all right; if it neither exists nor doesn't exist, that is all right too. That is why an Ancient said, "When at an impasse, change; when you change, then you can pass through." People nowadays do not know how to change and pass through; they only go running to the spoken words. When Nan Ch'uan held up (the cat) in this way, he could not have been telling people they should be able to say something; he just wanted people to attain on their own, each act on their own, and know for themselves. If you do not understand it in this way, after all you will grope without finding it. Hsueh Tou versifies it directly:

## VERSE

*In both halls they are phoney Ch'an followers:*

Familiar words come from a familiar mouth. With one phrase he has said it all. He settles the case according to the facts.

*Stirring up smoke and dust, they are helpless.*

Look; what settlement will you make? A completely obvious public case. Still there's something here.

*Fortunately, there is Nan Ch'uan, who is able to uphold the command:*

Raising my whisk, I say, "It's just like this." Old Master Wang (Nan Ch'uan) amounts to something. He uses the fine jewel-sword of the Diamond King to cut mud.

*With one stroke of the knife he cuts into two pieces, letting them be lopsided as they may.*

Shattered into a hundred fragments. If someone should suddenly hold his knife still, see what he would do. He can't be let go, so I strike!

#### COMMENTARY

"In both halls they are phoney Ch'an followers." Hsueh Tou does not die at the phrase, and he also does not acknowledge that which is ahead of a donkey but behind a horse. He has a place to turn, so he says, "Stirring up smoke and dust, they are helpless." Hsueh Tou and Nan Ch'uan walk hand in hand; in one phrase he has said it all. The leaders of the two halls have no place to rest their heads; everywhere they go, they just stir up smoke and dust, unable to accomplish anything. Fortunately there is Nan Ch'uan to settle this public case for them, and he wraps it up cleanly and thoroughly. But what can be done for them, who neither reached home nor got to the shop? That is why he said, "Fortunately there is Nan Ch'uan, who is able to uphold the command; with one stroke of the knife he cuts into two pieces, letting them be lopsided as they may." He directly cuts in two with one knife, without further concern as to whether they'll be unevenly lopsided. But tell me, what command is Nan Ch'uan enforcing?

# Nan Ch'uan Questions Chao Chou

## CASE

Nan Ch'uan recited the preceding story to question Chao Chou.<sup>1</sup> Chou immediately took off his straw sandals, placed them on his head, and left.<sup>2</sup> Nan Ch'uan said, "If you had been here, you could have saved the cat."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. They must be of like hearts and like minds before this is possible. Only one on the same road would know.
2. He does not avoid trailing mud and dripping water.
3. Singing and clapping, they accompany each other; those who know the tune are few. He adds error to error.

## COMMENTARY

Chao Chou was Nan Ch'uan's true heir; when Nan Ch'uan spoke of the head, Chao Chou understood the tail; when it is brought up, he immediately knows where it comes down.

In the evening Nan Ch'uan repeated the preceding story and asked Chao Chou about it. Chou was an old adept; he immediately took off his straw sandals, put them on his head, and left. Ch'uan said, "If you had been here, you could have saved the cat." But tell me, was it really like this or not? Nan Ch'uan said, "If you can speak, then I won't kill it." Like a flint-struck spark, like a flash of lightning. Chao Chou immediately took off his sandals, put them on his head, and left; he studied the living word, not the dead word—each day renewed, each moment renewed; even the thousand sages could not stir a hairsbreadth. You must bring forth your own family treasure; only then will you see the great function of his total capacity. He is saying, "I am King of Dharma, free in all respects."<sup>a</sup>

Many people misunderstand and say that Chao Chou temporarily made his sandals into the cat. Some say he meant, "When you say, 'If you can speak, then I won't kill it,' I would then put my sandals on my head and leave. It's just you killing the cat—it is none of my business." But this has nothing to do with it; this is just giving play to the spirit. You are far from knowing that the Ancient's meaning was like the universal cover of the sky, like the universal support of the earth.

That father and son conformed with each other; the edges of their activity met with each other. When Nan Ch'uan raised the head, Chao Chou immediately understood the tail. Students these days do not know the turning point of the Ancients, and vainly go to the road of ideation to figure them out. If you want to see, just go to Nan Ch'uan's and Chao Chou's turning points and you will see them well.

#### VERSE

*The public case completed, he questions Chao Chou:*

The words are still in our ears. No use to cut any more. He hangs a medicine bag on the back of a hearse.

*In the city of Ch'ang An, he's free to wander at leisure.<sup>b</sup>*

He has attained such joyful liveliness; he has attained such freedom. He lets his hands pick the plants. I cannot but let you go on this way.

*His straw sandals he wears on his head—no one understands;*

Yet there is one or a half. This is a special style. Light is fitting, darkness is also fitting.

*Returning to his native village, then he rests.*

You should be given thirty blows right where you stand. But tell me, where is the fault? It's just that you are raising waves where there is no wind. They let each other off. I only fear you will not be thus; if so, it's quite unusual.

#### COMMENTARY

"The public case completed, he questions Chao Chou." The librarian Ch'ing said, "It is like a man settling a case; eight strokes of the staff is eight strokes; thirteen is thirteen. Already

he has settled it completely. Yet he then brings it up to ask Chao Chou."

Chao Chou was a man of his household and understood the essence of Nan Ch'uan's meaning. He was a man who had thoroughly passed through; struck, he resounds and immediately rolls. He possesses the eyes and brain of a genuine adept; as soon as he hears it mentioned, he immediately gets up and acts.

Hsueh Tou says, "In the city of Ch'ang An, he is free to roam at leisure." He is quite a dotard. An Ancient said, "Although Ch'ang An is pleasant, it is not a place to stay for long." It has also been said, "Ch'ang An is quite noisy; my province is peaceful." Still, you must recognize what is appropriate to the situation and distinguish good and bad before you will understand.

"His grass sandals he wears on his head—no one understands." When he put the sandals on his head, this bit, though without so much ado, is why it is said, "Only I myself can know, only I myself can experience it." Then you will be able to see how Nan Ch'uan, Chao Chou, and Hsueh Tou attained alike and acted alike.

But tell me, right now, how will you understand? "Returning to his native village, then he rests." What place is his native village? If he didn't understand, he surely wouldn't speak this way. Since he did understand, tell me, where is the native village. I strike immediately.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This phrase is taken from the *Saddharmapundarika* scripture, where it refers to the Buddha's independent mastery in the use of teachings, provisional or true, in a manner appropriate to the time, situation, and capacities of the hearers.
- b. Commentaries explain variously that this second line refers to Nan Ch'uan, to Chao Chou, or to both. Ch'ang An, which name means "eternal peace," was at various times a capital of the Chinese empire. As "the capital," it was used in Ch'an to refer to enlightenment; that one should not dwell forever in Ch'ang An is a re-statement of the admonition to transcend all sense of attainment, not to be attached to the Dharma.

# An Outsider Questions the Buddha

## POINTER

Appearing without form, filling the ten directions of space, expanding everywhere equally; responding without mind, extending over lands and seas without trouble; understanding three when one is raised, judging grains and ounces at the glance of an eye. Even if the blows of your staff fall like rain and your shouts are like thunder rolling, still you have not yet filled the footsteps of a transcendent man. But tell me, what is the business of a transcendent man? Try to see.

## CASE

An outsider asked the Buddha, "I do not ask about the spoken or the unspoken."<sup>1</sup> The World Honored One remained silent.<sup>2</sup> The outsider sighed in admiration and said, "The World Honored One's great kindness and great compassion have opened up my clouds of illusion and let me gain entry."<sup>3</sup>

After the outsider had left, Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did the outsider realize, that he said he had gained entry?"<sup>4</sup> The Buddha said, "Like a good horse, he goes as soon as he sees the shadow of the whip."<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. Although he is not a member of the household, still he has a bit of a fragrant air. Twin swords fly through space. It's lucky he doesn't ask.
2. Do not slander the World Honored One; his voice is like thunder. No one sitting or standing here could move him.
3. A sharp fellow—one push and he rolls, a bright pearl in a bowl.
4. He can't avoid making others doubt; still he wants everyone to know. He is trying to repair a pot with cold iron.

5. Tell me, what do you call the shadow of the whip? Striking with my whisk, (I say) on the staff there is an eye bright as the sun. If you want to know if it is real gold, see it through fire. Having gotten a mouth, eat.

## COMMENTARY

If this matter were in words and phrases, do not the twelve parts of the Teachings of the Three Vehicles contain words and phrases? Some say it is right just not to speak. Then what would have been the use of the Patriarch's coming from the West? As for so many public cases which have come down from ancient times, after all how will you see what they are getting at?

This one public case is understood verbally by quite a few people. Some call it remaining silent, some call it remaining seated, and some call it silently not answering. But fortunately none of this has anything to do with it; how could you ever manage to find it by groping around? This matter really isn't in words and phrases, yet it is not apart from words and phrases. If you have the slightest bit of hesitation, then you are a thousand miles, ten thousand miles away. See how after that outsider had intuitively awakened, only then did he realize that it is neither here nor there, neither in affirmation nor in negation. But tell me, what is this?

Master I Huai of T'ien I made a verse which said,

*Vimalakirti was not silent, did not remain that way;<sup>a</sup>*

*Sitting on his seat engaged in deliberation, he made an error.*

*Though the sharp sword is in its scabbard, its chill light is cold;*

*Outsiders and celestial demons all fold their hands helplessly.*

When Master Tao Ch'ang of Pai Chang was studying with Fa Yen, Yen had him contemplate this story. Fa Yen one day asked him, "What incident are you contemplating?" Ch'ang said, "The outsider questioning the Buddha." Yen said, "Stop! Stop! You're about to go to his silence to understand, aren't

you?" At these words Ch'ang was suddenly greatly enlightened. Later, in teaching his community, he said, "On Pai Chang there are three secrets; 'drink tea,' 'take care,' and 'rest.' If you still try to think any more about them, I know you are still not through."

"Breast-beater Chen" of Ts'ui Yen cited (this case) and said, "In the six directions and nine states, blue, yellow, red, and white each intermingle."

The outsider knew the four Vedas and told himself he was omniscient; everywhere he was, he drew people into discussions. He posed a question, hoping to cut off old Shakyas Buddha's tongue. The World Honored One did not expend any energy, yet the outsider was immediately awakened. He sighed in admiration and said, "The World Honored One's great kindness and great compassion have opened up the clouds of my confusion and allowed me to gain entry."

But tell me, where are the World Honored One's great kindness and compassion? The World Honored One's single eye sees through past, present, and future; the outsider's twin pupils penetrate the Indian continent.

Chen Ju of Kuei Shan brought this up and said,

*The heretic had the most precious jewel hidden within;*

*The World Honored One kindly lifted it on high for him.*

*Forests of patterns are clearly revealed,  
Myriad forms are evident.*

But after all, what did the outsider realize? It was like chasing a dog towards a fence: when he gets as far as is possible, when there is no way to get by, he must turn around and come back; then he will be leaping lively. If you cast away judgement and comparison and affirmation and negation all at once, your emotions ended and your views gone, it will naturally become thoroughly obvious.

After the outsider had left, Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did the outsider realize, that he said he had gained entry?" The Buddha said, "Like a good horse, he goes as soon as he sees the shadow of the whip." Since then, everywhere it has been said that at this point even he was blown by the wind into a different tune. It has also been said that he had a dragon's head but a



snake's tail. Where is the shadow of the World Honored One's whip? Where is the seeing of the shadow of the whip? Hsueh Tou said, "False and true are not separate; the fault comes from the shadow of the whip."

Chen Ju said, "Ananda's golden bell is rung twice, and everyone hears it together. Even though this is so, it is very much like two dragons fighting for a jewel. It matured the majestic dragon of that other wise one."

# VERSE

*The wheel of potential has never turned;*  
It is here. After all it doesn't move a bit.

*If it turns, it will surely go two ways.*  
If it doesn't fall into existence, it will surely fall into  
nonexistence; if it doesn't go east, then it will go west.  
The left eye is half a pound, the right eye eight ounces.

*A clear mirror is suddenly leaned on a stand,*  
But do you see old Shakyamuni? One push and it turns.  
Broken! Broken! Scattered! Scattered!

*And immediately distinguishes beautiful and ugly.*  
The whole world is the gate of liberation. I should give  
you thirty blows of the staff. But do you see old  
Shakyamuni?

*Beautiful and ugly distinct, the clouds of illusion open.*  
He lets out a pathway. I allow as you have a place to turn  
your body, but nevertheless you're just an outsider.

*In the gate of compassion, where is any dust produced?*  
The whole world has never concealed it. Retreat;  
retreat—Bodhidharma has come.

*Thus I think of a good horse seeing the whip's shadow:*  
I have a staff; there's no need for you to give me one. But  
tell me, where is the shadow of the whip, and where is the  
good horse?

*Gone a thousand miles in pursuit of the wind, I call him back;*  
Riding on the Buddha-hall, I go out the main gate. If he  
turns around, he goes wrong. He shouldn't be let go, so I  
strike.

*Calling, if I get him to return, I'd snap my fingers thrice.*

He neither reaches the village nor gets to the shop. With your staff broken, where will you go? The sound of Hsueh Tou's thunder is great, but there is no rain at all.

#### COMMENTARY

"The wheel of potential has never turned; if it turns it will surely go two ways." The "potential" is the spiritual potential of the thousand sages; the "wheel" is the original lifeline of all people. Have you not read Hsueh Tou's saying,

*The spiritual potential of the thousand sages is not easily approached;*

*Dragon's sons born of dragons, do not be irresolute.*

*Chao Chou has stolen a gem worth many cities;*

*The King of Ch'in and Hsiang Ju both lose their lives.<sup>b</sup>*

The outsider, after all, was able to hold it still and be the master; he never moved at all. How so? He said, "I do not ask about the spoken or the unspoken." Is this not the entirety of potential?

The World Honored One knew how to observe the wind to set the sail, how to give medicine in accordance with the disease; that is why he remained silent. The entire potential uplifted, the outsider merged with it completely; his wheel of potential then turned freely and smoothly: it neither turned towards existence nor nonexistence; it did not fall into gain or loss, was not bound by the ordinary or the holy—both sides were cut off at once. Just as the World Honored One remained silent, the other bowed. Many people nowadays fall into nonexistence, or else they fall into existence; they only remain within being and non-being, running either way.

Hsueh Tou says, "A clear mirror is suddenly leaned on a stand, and immediately distinguishes beautiful and ugly." This has never moved; it just calls for silence, like a clear mirror leaning on its stand—myriad forms cannot avoid their appearance.

The outsider said, "The World Honored One's great kindness and compassion have opened my clouds of illusion and

allowed me to gain entry." Tell me, where is the outsider's point of entry? At this point, you must each seek on your own, investigate on your own, awaken on your own, and understand on your own before you will find it. Then in all places, walking, standing, sitting, and lying, without question of high or low, all at once it is completely manifest and does not move at all anymore. The moment they make judgements and comparisons, or have the slightest hair of rationalization, then this blocks people up completely, and there is no more ability to enter actively.

The last part versifies, "The World Honored One's great kindness and great compassion have opened up the clouds of my illusion and allowed me to gain entry." Right away he abruptly distinguishes beautiful and ugly; "Beautiful and ugly distinct, the clouds of illusion open; in the gate of compassion, where is any dust produced?" The whole world is the door of the World Honored One's great compassion. If you can pass through, it's not worth grasping. This also is an open door. Have you not read how the World Honored One contemplated this matter for twenty-one days—"I would rather not explain the truth, but quickly enter extinction."

"So I think of a good horse seeing the shadow of the whip; gone a thousand miles in pursuit of the wind, I call him back." A "wind-chasing" horse, seeing the shadow of a whip, immediately goes a thousand miles; if you make it return, it returns. Hsueh Tou intends to praise him by saying, "If you find an excellent breed, then you can give one push, and he immediately rolls; one call, and he immediately comes back. Calling, if I get him to return, I'd snap my fingers thrice." But tell me, is this criticism, or is it scattering sand?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. In the scripture spoken by Vimalakirti (*Vimalakirtinirdesasutra*), after hearing a number of bodhisattvas give eloquent explanations of non-duality, the enlightened layman Vimalakirti gave his explanation of non-duality by not saying anything; Manjusri, the embodiment of wisdom, praised this explanation as most eloquent. (See Case 84.)

- b. Hsiang Ju was a minister of the King of Chao in the early third century B.C., during the "Warring States" period; he was sent to offer a rare gem to the king of Ch'in (a neighboring state in what is now northern China) in exchange for dominion over fifteen cities. After presenting the gem, Hsiang Ju perceived that the king of Ch'in was reluctant to keep his part of the bargain; so he used a ruse to get the gem back, and had it returned secretly to the kingdom of Chao. In this poem from his *Tsu Ying Chi* ("Collection on Outstanding Ancestors"), Hsueh Tou constructs a simile based on the name of Chao Chou, the place where the great Ch'an master Ts'ung Shen (778-897) lived. He was called by the name of the place, which had been in the ancient Kingdom of Chao. The King of Ch'in and Hsiang Ju represent opposition; the Buddha, represented by Ch'an master Chao Chou, cuts off opposition by taking away the object of contention.

# Yen T'ou's Getting Huang Ch'ao's Sword

## POINTER

Meeting the situation head-on, setting a pitfall for a tiger; attacking from front and side, laying out strategy to capture a thief. Adapting in light and adapting in darkness, letting both go or gathering both in, knowing how to play with a deadly snake—all this is a matter for an adept.

## CASE

Yen T'ou asked a monk, "Where do you come from?"<sup>1</sup>

The monk said, "From the Western Capital."<sup>2</sup>

Yen T'ou said, "After Huang Ch'ao had gone, did you get his sword?"<sup>3</sup>

The monk said, "I got it."<sup>4</sup>

Yen T'ou extended his neck, came near and said, "Yaa!"<sup>5</sup>

The monk said, "Your head has fallen, Master."<sup>6</sup> Yen T'ou laughed out loud.<sup>7</sup>

Later that monk went to Hsueh Feng.<sup>8</sup> Feng asked, "Where did you come from?"<sup>9</sup> The monk said, "From Yen T'ou."<sup>10</sup> Hsueh Feng said, "What did he have to say?"<sup>11</sup> The monk recounted the preceding story.<sup>12</sup> Hsueh Feng hit him thirty blows with his staff and drove him out.<sup>13</sup>

## NOTES

1. He is defeated before he even opens his mouth. (Yen T'ou) is boring into a skullbone. If you want to know where he's coming from, it's not hard.
2. After all, he's a petty thief.
3. Yen T'ou has never been a petty thief. He doesn't fear losing his head, so he asks such a question: he's very courageous indeed!

4. He's defeated, but doesn't know where to turn. Ignoramuses are as plentiful as hemp and millet.
5. He must know what's appropriate to the moment, to do this. This is a pitfall to catch a tiger. What is going on in his mind?
6. He only sees the sharpness of the awl; he does not see the squareness of the chisel. What good or bad does he know? He's struck!
7. No patchrobed monk in the world can do anything to him. He completely fools everyone in the world. No one can find out where this old fellow's head has fallen.
8. As before, he is fatheaded and stupid. This monk is thoroughly defeated time and again.
9. He cannot but tell where he comes from; but still Hsueh Feng wants to try him.
10. After all he is defeated.
11. If he can recite it, he won't avoid getting hit.
12. Right then he should be driven out.
13. Although it is true that he cuts nails and shears through iron, why does he only strike thirty blows with his staff? He hasn't yet gotten to the point where his staff breaks. This is not yet the real thing. Why? "Three thousand blows in the morning, eight hundred blows in the evening." If (Hsueh Feng) were not a fellow student (with Yen T'ou), how could he discern the point? Although this is so, just tell me, where do Hsueh Feng and Yen T'ou abide?

#### COMMENTARY

Whenever you carry your bag and bowl, pulling out the weeds seeking the Way, you must first possess the foot-travelling eye. This monk's eyes were like comets, yet he was still thoroughly exposed by Yen T'ou, and pierced all the way through on a single string. At that time, if he had been a man, whether it were to kill or to enliven, he would have made use of it immediately as soon as it was brought up. But this monk was a rickety dotard and instead said, "I got it." If you travel on foot like this, the King of Death will question you and demand you pay your grocery bill. I don't know how many straw sandals he wore out until he got to Hsueh Feng. At that time, if he had had a little bit of eye power, then he would have been able to get a glimpse; wouldn't that have felt good?

This story has a knotty complication in it. Although this matter has neither gain nor loss, the gain and loss are tremendous: although there is no picking and choosing, when you get here, you after all must possess the eyes to pick and choose.

See how when Lung Ya was travelling on foot, he posed this question to Te Shan: "How is it when the student wants to take the Master's head with a sharp sword?" Te Shan stretched out his neck, approached, and said, "Yaa!" Lung Ya said, "The Master's head has fallen." Te Shan returned to the abbot's room. Lung Ya later recited this to Tung Shan. Tung Shan said, "What did Te Shan say at the time?" Lung Ya said, "He said nothing." Tung Shan said, "His having nothing to say, I leave aside for the moment: just bring Te Shan's fallen head for me to see." Lung Ya at these words was greatly awakened; later he burned incense, and gazing far off towards Te Shan, he bowed and repented. A monk repeated this to Te Shan. Te Shan said, "Old man Tung Shan does not know good from bad; this fellow has been dead for so long, even if you could revive him, what would be the use?"

This public case is the same as that of Lung Ya: Te Shan returned to the abbot's room; thus in darkness he was most wonderful. Yen T'ou laughs loudly—in his laugh there is poison: if any one could discern it, he could travel freely throughout the world. If this monk had been able to pick it out at that moment, he would have escaped critical examination for all time. But at Yen T'ou's place, he had already missed it. Observe that old man Hsueh Feng; being a fellow student (with Yen T'ou), he immediately knew where he was at. Still, he didn't explain it all for that monk, but just hit him thirty blows of the staff and drove him out of the monastery. Thereby he was "before light and after annihilation." This is the method of holding up the nostrils of an adept patchrobed monk to help the person; he doesn't do anything else for him, but makes him awaken on his own.

When genuine teachers of our school help people, sometimes they trap them and do not let them come out; sometimes they release them and let them be slovenly. After all, they must have a place to appear. Yen T'ou and Hsueh Feng, supposedly so great, were on the contrary exposed by this rice-eating Ch'an follower. When Yen T'ou said, "After Huang Ch'ao had gone, did you get his sword?" People, tell me, what

could be said here to avoid his laughter, and to avoid Hsueh Feng's brandishing his staff and driving him out? Here it is difficult to understand; if you have never personally witnessed and personally awakened, even if your mouth is swift and sharp to the very end, you will not be able to pass through and out of birth and death. I always teach people to observe the pivot of this action; if you hesitate, you are far, far away from it. Have you not seen how T'ou Tzu asked a monk from Yen Ping, "Have you brought a sword?" The monk pointed at the ground with his hand. T'ou Tzu said, "For thirty years I have been handling horses, but today I have been kicked by a mule." Look at that monk; he too was undeniably an adept—neither did he say he had it, nor did he say he did not have it; he was like an ocean away from the monk from the Western Capital. Chen Ju brought this up and said, "Those Ancients; one acted as the head, the other as the tail, for sure."

Hsueh Tou's verse says,

#### VERSE

*After Huang Ch'ao's passing, he had picked up the sword.*

What is the usefulness of an impetuous fellow? This is just a tin knife.

*The great laughter after all needs an adept to understand it.*

One son is familiar with it. How many could be?

*Thirty blows of the mountain cane is still a light punishment;*

Born of the same lineage, they die of the same lineage. In the morning, three thousand; in the evening, eight hundred. When someone in the eastern house dies, someone of the western house helps in the mourning. But can they bring him back to life?

*To take advantage is to lose the advantage.*

He settles the case according to the facts. It is regrettable not to have been careful in the very beginning.

#### COMMENTARY

"After Huang Ch'ao's passing, he had picked up the sword. The great laughter needs an adept to understand it." Hsueh Tou



immediately versifies this monk and Yen T'ou's great laughter. This little bit cannot be grasped by anyone in the world. But tell me, what was he laughing at? You must be an adept in order to know. In this laughter there is the provisional, there is the real; there is illumination and there is function; there is killing and there is giving life.

"Thirty blows of the mountain cane is still a light punishment." This versifies this monk later coming into the presence of Hsueh Feng: the monk was as crude as before, so Feng there-upon acted as was imperative, and hit him thirty times with his staff and drove him out. But tell me, why did he act like this? Do you want to understand this story fully? "To take the advantage is to lose the advantage."

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. In 874 a rebellion against the T'ang dynasty broke out, and under the leadership of Wang Hsien-chih overthrew government forces in many parts of China. Huang Ch'ao was a follower of Wang, and when the latter was killed in the fifth year of the rebellion, Huang Ch'ao took over the leadership of the rebel forces. Eventually they occupied Ch'ang An, the western capital, and slew all the members of the Imperial family who were still there. Huang Ch'ao proclaimed himself Emperor and intended to start a new dynasty, but in 881 he was finally driven out of Ch'ang An, and in 884 he was at last defeated and killed. This great rebellion, which brought about the ultimate downfall of the T'ang dynasty, is usually known as the Huang Ch'ao rebellion. Huang Ch'ao himself had earlier failed the government civil service examinations several times and had taken up salt-selling. According to legend, one day he suddenly obtained a sword which was inscribed, "Heaven gives this to Huang Ch'ao," and this inspired him to join the rebel forces of Wang Hsien-chih. In Ch'an terminology, a sword is a metaphor for *prajna*, or transcendent wisdom; Yen T'ou used the fact that the monk came from Ch'ang An to pose his question in this way. Yen T'ou died in 887, so the Huang Ch'ao rebellion was a current event.

# Mahasattva Fu Expounds the Scripture

## CASE

Emperor Wu of Liang requested Mahasattva Fu to expound the Diamond Cutter Scripture.<sup>1</sup> The Mahasattva shook the desk once, then got down off the seat.<sup>2</sup> Emperor Wu was astonished.<sup>3</sup>

Master Chih asked him, "Does Your Majesty understand?"<sup>4</sup> The Emperor said, "I do not understand."<sup>5</sup> Master Chih said, "The Mahasattva Fu has expounded the scripture."<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. Bodhidharma's brother has come. This is not unheard of in fish markets and wineshops, but in the school of the patchrobed monks, it is inappropriate. This old fellow Fu is supposedly so venerable and great, yet he acts like this.
2. He's like a comet bursting out then disappearing. He seems to be right, but is not yet really right. He doesn't bother to create any entangling complications.
3. Twice and three times he's been fooled by someone. Fu too makes him unable to get a grasp.
4. He sides with principle, not with emotion. The elbow does not bend outward. He too should be given thirty blows.
5. What a pity!
6. He too should be driven from the country. Only if Emperor Wu at that time had at once driven Master Chih out of the country along with Mahasattva Fu would he have been an adept. (Chih and Fu) are two fellows in the same pit, where the dirt is no different.

## COMMENTARY

Emperor Wu, the founder of the Liang Dynasty, was of the Hsiao clan. His name was Yen and his nickname was Shu Ta. By the deeds he accomplished, he came to secure the abdication of the Ch'i Dynasty.<sup>a</sup> After he had assumed the throne, he made new commentaries on the Five Confucian Classics, to expound them. He served Huang-Lao (Taoism) very faithfully, and his nature was most filial.

One day he thought of attaining the transmundane teaching in order to requite (his parents') toil. At this point he abandoned Taoism and served Buddhism. Then he received the Bodhisattva precepts from the Dharma Master Lou Yueh. He put on Buddhist vestments and personally expounded the Light-emitting Wisdom Scripture to recompense his parents.

At the time, the Mahasattva Master Chih, because he manifested wonders and confused people, was confined in prison. Master Chih then reproduced his body and wandered around teaching in the city. The emperor one day found out about this and was inspired. He esteemed Chih most highly. Master Chih time and again practiced protective concealment; his disappearances and appearances were incomprehensible.

At that time there was a Mahasattva in Wu Chou, dwelling on Yun Huang Mountain. He had personally planted two trees and called them the "Twin Trees." He called himself the "Future Mahasattva Shan Hui." One day he composed a letter and had a disciple present it to the emperor. At the time, the court did not accept it because he had neglected the formalities of a subject in respect to the ruler.

When the Mahasattva Fu was going to go into the city of Chin Ling (Nanking, the capital of Liang) to sell fish, at that time the emperor Wu happened to request Master Chih to expound the Diamond Cutter Scripture. Chih said, "This poor wayfarer cannot expound it, but in the market place there is a Mahasattva Fu who is able to expound the scripture." The emperor issued an imperial order to summon him to the inner palace.

Once Mahasattva Fu had arrived, he mounted the lecturing seat, shook the desk once, and then got down off the seat. At that moment, if (Wu) had pushed it over for him, he would

have avoided a mess; instead he was asked by Master Chih, "Does Your Majesty understand?" The emperor said, "I do not understand." Master Chih said, "The Mahasattva has expounded the scripture thoroughly." This too is one man acting as the head and one man acting as the tail. But when Master Chih spoke in this way, did he after all see Mahasattva Fu, even in a dream? Everyone gives play to their spirits, but this one is outstanding among them. Although it is a deadly snake, if you know how to handle it, you'll still be alive. Since he was expounding the scripture, why then did he not make the general distinction into two aspects, just as ordinary lecturers say—"The substance of the Diamond is hard and solid, so that nothing can destroy it; because of its sharp function, it can smash myriad things." Explaining like this could then be called expounding the scripture. People hardly understand: the Mahasattva Fu only brought up the transcendental mainspring and briefly showed the swordpoint, to let people know the ultimate intent, directly standing it up for you like a mile-high wall. It was only appropriate that he should be subject to Master Chih's ignorance of good and bad in saying, "The Mahasattva has expounded the scripture thoroughly." Indeed, he had a good intent but didn't get a good response. It was like a cup of fine wine, which was diluted with water by Master Chih; like a bowl of soup being polluted by Master Chih with a piece of rat shit.

But tell me, granted that this is not expounding the scripture, ultimately what can you call it? The verse says,

#### VERSE

*He does not rest this body by the Twin Trees:*

It's just because he can't hold still. How could it be possible to hide a sharp awl inside a bag?

*Instead, in the land of Liang he stirs up dust.*

If he did not enter the weeds, how could we see the point?  
Where there is no style, there is still style.

*At that time, if it weren't for old Master Chih,*

To be a thief, one does not need capital. There is a leper dragging a companion along.

*He too would have been a man hastily leaving the country.*

His crime should be listed on the same indictment; so I strike.

#### COMMENTARY

"He does not rest this body by the Twin Trees; instead, in the land of Liang he stirs up dust." Mahasattva Fu and that old gap-toothed fellow (Bodhidharma) met (Emperor Wu) in the same way. When Bodhidharma first arrived at Chin Ling and saw Emperor Wu, the emperor asked, "What is the highest meaning of the holy truths?" Bodhidharma said, "Empty, without holiness." The emperor said, "Who is here in my presence?" Bodhidharma said, "I don't know." The emperor did not understand, so Bodhidharma eventually crossed the river into Wei. Emperor Wu mentioned this to Master Chih and asked him about it. Chih said, "Does Your Majesty recognize this man, or not?" The emperor said, "I do not recognize him." Master Chih said, "This is the Mahasattva Avalokitesvara, transmitting the seal of the Buddha-mind." The emperor felt regret and so sent an emissary to get (Bodhidharma). Master Chih said, "Don't tell me Your Majesty is going to send an emissary to get him: even if everyone in the country went, he would not return." That is why Hsueh Tou says, "At that time, if not for Master Chih, he too would have been a man hastily leaving the country." At the time, if it hadn't been for Master Chih exerting energy on behalf of Mahasattva Fu, he too would surely have been driven out of the country. Since Master Chih was so talkative, Emperor Wu after all was fooled by him.

Hsueh Tou's intent is to say that there is no need for him to come to the land of Liang to expound the scripture and shake the desk. That's why he says, "Why does he not rest this body by the Twin Trees, eating gruel and eating rice, passing the time according to his means? Instead he comes to the land of Liang, and comments in this way—shaking the desk once, he immediately gets down off the seat." This is where he stirs up dust.

If you want the marvelous, then look at the cloudy skies; above you do not see that there is any Buddha, and below you do not see that there are any sentient beings. If you discuss the

business of appearing in the world, you cannot avoid ashes on your head and dirt on your face, taking the non-existent and making it exist, taking the existent and making it not exist; taking right and making it wrong, taking coarse and making it fine; in the fish markets and wineshops, holding it sideways and using it upside down, making everyone understand this matter. If you do not let go in this way, then even until Maitreya is born, there will not be one or a half (who will understand). Mahasattva Fu was already dragging in mud and dripping with water; fortunately he had a sympathizer. If not for old Master Chih, he would probably have been driven out of the country. But tell me, where is he now?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Murderous fighting within the ruling Liu clan gave the local commander Hsiao Tao Cheng the chance to overthrow the Sung and set up his new Ch'i Dynasty in 479. Within fifteen years a collateral branch of the Hsiao clan had usurped the throne, leading to new strife and inner turmoil and giving an opportunity for a local commander to repeat the scenario. This man, Hsiao Yen, became Emperor Wu of the Liang Dynasty.

# Yang Shan's What's Your Name?

## POINTER

He overthrows the polar star and reverses the earthly axis; he captures tigers and rhinos, distinguishes dragons from snakes—one must be a lively acting fellow before he can match phrase for phrase, and correspond act to act. But since time immemorial, who could be this way? Please bring him up for me to see.

## CASE

Yang Shan asked San Sheng, "What is your name?"<sup>1</sup>

Sheng said, "Hui Chi."<sup>2</sup>

Yang Shan said, "Hui Chi? That's me."<sup>3</sup>

Sheng said, "My name is Hui Jan."<sup>4</sup>

Yang Shan laughed aloud.<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. His name is about to be stolen. He brings in a thief, who ransacks his house.
2. (San Sheng) cut off (Yang Shan's) tongue; took his flag and stole his drum.
3. Each guards his own territory.
4. He steals in the noisy market place. That one and this one guard their own portion.
5. It can be said that this is the season; he spreads flowers on brocade.

## COMMENTARY

San Sheng was a venerable adept in the Lin Chi succession. Since youth he possessed abilities that stood out from the

crowd: he had great capacity and had great function; while still in the community, he was in full vigor, and his name was known everywhere.

Later he left Lin Chi and travelled throughout Huai Nan and Hai Chou<sup>a</sup>; the monasteries everywhere he went all treated him as a distinguished guest. He went from the north to the south; first he went to Hsueh Feng and asked, "What does a golden carp who has passed through the net take for food?" Feng said, "Wait till you've come out of the net; then I'll tell you." Sheng said, "The teacher of fifteen hundred people doesn't even know what to say." Feng said, "My tasks as abbot are many." As Hsueh Feng was going to the temple manor, on the way he encountered some macaques, whereupon he said, "Each of the macaques is wearing an ancient mirror." San Sheng said, "For aeons it has been nameless; why do you depict it as an ancient mirror?" Feng said, "A flaw has been created." Sheng said, "The teacher of fifteen hundred people does not even know what to say." Feng said, "My fault. My tasks as abbot are many."

Later he came to Yang Shan. Shan very much admired his outstanding acuity and seated him under the bright window.<sup>b</sup> One day an official came to call on Yang Shan. Shan asked him, "What is your official position?" He said, "I am a judge." Shan raised his whisk and said, "And can you judge this?" The official was speechless. All the people of the community made comments, but none accorded with Yang Shan's idea. At that time San Sheng was sick and staying in the Life-Prolonging Hall: Yang Shan ordered his attendant to take these words and ask him about them. Sheng said, "The Master has a problem." (Yang Shan) again ordered his attendant to ask, "What is the problem?" Sheng said, "A second offense is not permitted." Yang Shan deeply approved of this.

Pai Chang had formerly imparted his meditation brace and cushion to Huang Po, and had bequeathed his staff and whisk to Kuei Shan; Kuei Shan later gave them to Yang Shan. Since Yang Shan greatly approved of San Sheng, when one day Sheng took his leave and departed, Yang Shan took his staff and whisk to hand them over to San Sheng. Sheng said, "I already have a teacher." When Yang Shan inquired into his reason for saying this, it was that he was a true heir of Lin Chi.

When Yang Shan asked San Sheng, "What is your name?"



he could not have but known his name; why did he then go ahead and ask in this way? The reason is that an adept wants to test people to be able to know them thoroughly. He just seemed to be casually asking, "What is your name?", and spoke no further judgement or comparison. Why did San Sheng not say "Hui Jan," but instead said, "Hui Chi"? See how a man who has the eye is naturally not the same (as others). This manner of San Sheng's was still not crazy, though; he simply captured the flag and stole the drum. His meaning was beyond Yang Shan's words. These words do not fall within the scope of ordinary feelings; they are difficult to get a grasp on. The methods of such a fellow can bring people to life; that is why it is said, "He studies the living phrase—he does not study the dead phrase." If they followed ordinary feelings, then they couldn't set people at rest.

See how those men of old contemplated the Path like this: they exerted their spirits to the utmost, and only then were capable of great enlightenment. Once they were completely enlightened, when they used it, after all they appeared the same as people who were not yet enlightened. In any case, their one word or half a phrase could not fall into ordinary feelings.

San Sheng knew where Yang Shan was at, so he said to him, "My name is Hui Chi." Yang Shan wanted to take in San Sheng, but San Sheng conversely took in Yang Shan. Yang Shan was only able to make a counterattack and say, "I am Hui Chi." This is where he let go. San Sheng said, "My name is Hui Jan." This too is letting go. This is why Hsueh Tou later says, "Both gather in, both let go—which is fundamental?" With just one phrase he has completely versified it all at once.

Yang Shan laughed aloud. "Ha, ha!" There was both the provisional and the real, there was both illumination and function. Because he was crystal clear in every respect, therefore he functioned with complete freedom. This laugh was not the same as Yen T'ou's; in Yen T'ou's laugh there was poison, but in this laugh, for all eternity the pure wind blows chill.

#### VERSE

*Both gather in, both let go—which is fundamental!*

I don't know how many of them there are. Crystal clear in every respect. I thought that there really was such a thing.

*To ride a tiger always requires absolute competence.*

If you don't have the eye on your forehead and a talisman under your elbow, how could you get here? Ride you may, but I only fear you won't be able to get down. If you are not such a man, how could you understand such a thing?

*His laughter ended, I do not know where he's gone;*

Even if you seek throughout the country for such a man, he would be hard to find. His words are still in our ears. For ever and ever there is the pure wind.

*It is only fitting eternally to stir the wind of lament.*

Right now where is he? Bah! Since it is great laughter, why (does it) stir a piteous wind? The whole earth is flooded with darkness.

#### COMMENTARY

"Both gather in, both let go—which is fundamental?" Letting go, alternately they act as guest and host. Yang Shan says, "What is your name?" San Sheng says, "My name is Hui Chi." This is both letting go. Yang Shan says, "I am Hui Chi." Sheng says, "I am Hui Jan." This is both gathering in. In reality, this is the action of interchange: when gathering up, everyone gathers up; when letting go, everyone lets go. Hsueh T'ou has all at once completely versified it. What he means to say is that if we don't let go and gather up, if we don't interchange, then you are you and I am I.

The whole thing is just four characters (Hui Chi, Hui Jan): why is there after all emergence and disappearance, spreading out and rolling up therein? An Ancient said, "If you stand, I then sit; if you sit, I then stand. If we both sit or both stand at the same time, we'll both be blind men." This is both gathering, both releasing, which can be considered the fundamental essential.

"To ride a tiger always requires absolute competence." When you have such a lofty manner, the highest essential of active potential, when you want to ride, you ride; when you want to dismount, you dismount. You can sit on the tiger's head and also hold the tiger's tail. San Sheng and Yang Shan both had this style.

"His laughter ended, I do not know where he's gone." Tell me, what did he laugh at? He was just like the pure wind blowing chill and severe. Why does (Hsueh Tou) after all say in the end, "It is only fitting eternally to stir the wind of lament"? This too is death without mourning; all at once he has finished adding explanations for you, but nevertheless no one in the world can bite in, and they do not know where (Yang Shan) is at. Even I do not know where he is at; do you people know?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Central eastern and southeastern China; there were many monasteries in these regions where Ch'an flourished in the late T'ang and Five Dynasties eras.
- b. This means the first seat in the monks' hall, seat of the "chief monk," highest rank in the hall.

# Nan Ch'uan's Circle

## POINTER

There is no place to bite into: the Patriarchal Teacher's Mind Seal is formed like the works of the Iron Ox.<sup>a</sup> Having passed through the forest of thorns, a patchrobed monk is like a snowflake in a red hot furnace. As for piercing and penetrating on level ground, this I leave aside for the moment. Without falling into entangling ties, how will you act? To test, I cite this: look!

## CASE

Nan Ch'uan, Kuei Tsung, and Ma Ku went together to pay respects to National Teacher Chung. When they got halfway there,<sup>1</sup> Nan Ch'uan drew a circle on the ground and said, "If you can speak, then let's go on."<sup>2</sup> Kuei Tsung sat down inside the circle,<sup>3</sup> Ma Ku curtsied.<sup>4</sup> Nan Ch'uan said, "Then let's not go on."<sup>5</sup>

Kuei Tsung said, "What's going on in your mind?"<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. "Among three people travelling together, there must be a teacher of mine." What is so special? Still, they want to discern the truth.
2. He rouses waves where there is no wind. Still he wants people to know. He casts off a boat that's foundered on solid ground. Without posing a test, how could he discern the truth?
3. When one man strikes the cymbal, his companions join in.
4. When one man strikes the drum, all three prove able.
5. The one who can extricate himself halfway along is a good man. A good tune! An adept! An adept!

6. A lucky thing he understood him completely. At the time he should have given him a slap. Brash fellow!

#### COMMENTARY

At that time Ma Tsu's teaching was flourishing in Kiangsi, Shih T'ou's Way was current in Hu-Hsiang (Hunan), and National Teacher Chung's Way was influencing Ch'ang An. The latter had personally seen the Sixth Patriarch; at the time, of those in the South who held up their heads and wore horns, there was none who did not want to ascend his hall and enter his room; otherwise, they would be shamed by others.

These three old fellows wanted to go pay respects to National Teacher Chung; when they got half-way, they enacted this scenario of defeat. Nan Ch'uan said, "Then let's not go." Since they had each been able to speak, why did he instead say he wouldn't go? Tell me, what was the intention of that man of old? At that time, when he said, "Then let's not go," I would have slapped him right on the ear, to see what trick he would pull; what eternally upholds the all-embracing source is just this little bit of active essence. That is why Tz'u Ming said, "If you want to restrain him, just grab the rein and yank." Hit and he turns, like pushing down a gourd on the water. Many people say that (Nan Ch'uan's) words are words of disagreement, but they are far from knowing that in this matter, when you get to the ultimate point, it is necessary to leave the mud, get out of the water, draw out the wedges, and pull out the nails. If you make an intellectual interpretation, then you've missed it. The Ancients could turn and shift well; at this point they could not be otherwise—there must be killing and giving life: see how one of them sat inside the circle, and one curtsayed. That too was very good. Nan Ch'uan said, "Then let's not go." Kuei Tsung said, "What is going on in your mind?" Brash fellow! He too goes on like this. His whole idea was that he wanted to test Nan Ch'uan. Nan Ch'uan always said, "Call it thusness, and already it has changed." Nan Ch'uan, Kuei Tsung, and Ma Ku—after all they were people of one house. One holds, one releases; one kills, one enlivens: undeniably they are exceptional.

Hueh Tou's verse says:

## VERSE

*You Chi's arrow shoots the monkey:*

Who would dare to advance on the road facing  
him? Whenever he hits, he is marvelous; he hits the mark  
before he shoots.

*Circling the tree, how exceedingly direct!*

Without attaining mastery, how could one presume to be  
thus? North, south, east, west—one family style. They  
have already been going around for a long time.

*A thousand and ten thousand—*

Plentiful as hemp and millet. A pack of wild fox spirits.  
What about Nan Ch'uan?

*Who has ever hit the mark?*

One or a half. Not even one. Even one would still be no  
use.

*Calling them together, he beckons them, "Come, let's go  
back;"*

They're a bunch of fellows playing with a lump of mud.  
This is not as good as having gone back; then they would  
have gotten somewhere.

*He stops climbing on the road of Ts'ao Ch'i.*

Too much trouble. It seems to me that he is not a member  
of Ts'ao Ch'i's school. Level off the lowest of places, and  
there is too much; view the highest of places, and there is  
not enough.

*(Hsueh Tou) also said, "The road of Ts'ao Ch'i is level and  
even; why stop climbing?"*

Not only Nan Ch'uan extricates himself halfway along;  
Hsueh Tou also extricates himself halfway along. Even a  
good thing is not as good as nothing. Hsueh Tou too suf-  
fers from this kind of illness and pain.

## COMMENTARY

"You Chi's arrow shoots the monkey; circling the tree, how  
exceedingly direct!" You Chi was a man of Ch'u times; his  
surname was Yang, his name was Shu and his nickname was

You Chi. Once when King Chuang of Ch'u went out hunting, he saw a white monkey and had someone shoot it. That monkey grabbed the arrow and played with it. The King ordered his entourage of courtiers to shoot it, but none could hit it. The King then asked his courtiers, and they said to him, "The man You Chi is a good shot." So he ordered him to shoot it. As You Chi drew his bow, the monkey immediately hugged the tree and howled piteously. When the arrow was shot, the monkey went around the tree to avoid it. The arrow also circled the tree, and struck and killed the monkey. This was a supernatural arrow. Why does Hsueh Tou say it was exceedingly direct? If it had been too direct, it wouldn't have hit; since it went around the tree, why instead does Hsueh Tou say it was exceedingly direct? Hsueh Tou borrows the idea and indeed uses it well. This even appears in the *Ch'un Ch'iu*:<sup>b</sup> some people say that "circling the tree" is the circle; if they really think so, they do not know the basic import of the words—they do not know where the directness is. These three old fellows are on different roads but return to the same place. They are uniformly and equally exceedingly direct. If you know where they're going, then you are free in all directions without leaving your heart. A hundred rivers flow separately but alike return to the great sea. That is why Nan Ch'uan said, "Then let's not go." If you look at this with the true eye of a patchrobed monk, this is just giving play to the spirit: but if you call it giving play to the spirit, then it is not giving play to the spirit. My late Master Wu Tsu said, "Those three men were absorbed in the Lamp of Wisdom, absorbed in the King of Adornment." Although (Ma Ku) curtseyed in this way, he never understood it as curtseying; although (Nan Ch'uan) made a circle, he never understood it as a circle. Without understanding in this way, then how will you understand? Hsueh Tou says, "A thousand and ten thousand—who has ever hit the mark?" How many could there be who hit the mark a hundred times out of a hundred?

"Calling them together, he beckons them, 'Come, let us go back.'" This is versifying Nan Ch'uan's saying, "Then let's not go on." Nan Ch'uan did not go on from here, so it is said, "He stops climbing on the road of Ts'ao Ch'i." He destroys the forest of thorns. Hsueh Tou cannot hold still, and again says, "The road of Ts'ao Ch'i is level and even; why stop climbing?"

The road of Ts'ao Ch'i is dustless and trackless, openly exposed, naked and clean, level, even, and smooth: why, after all, stop climbing? Each of you should observe your own footsteps.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. See Translators' Note a, Case 38.
- b. The *Ch'un Ch'iu* is a classic book of historical annals of the state of Lu, said to have been composed by Confucius himself, covering the period 722–481 B.C., before the first unification of China. This eminent chronicle became a model for later histories.



# Kuei Shan Attends on Pai Chang

## POINTER

For a fast man, a single word; for a fast horse, a single stroke of the whip. Ten thousand years, one thought; one thought, ten thousand years. You must know directly before it is raised.

But say, before it is raised, how will you search for it? I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Kuei Shan, Wu Feng, and Yun Yen were together attending on Pai Chang.<sup>1</sup> Pai Chang asked Kuei Shan, "With your throat, mouth, and lips shut, how will you speak?"<sup>2</sup>

Kuei Shan said, "Please, Teacher, you speak instead."<sup>3</sup>

Chang said, "I don't refuse to speak to you, but I fear that (if I did) in the future I would be bereft of descendants."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. Haha! From beginning to end obscure and hard to understand. You're headed west, I'm going east.
2. One general is hard to find.
3. Kuei Shan proceeds by Pai Chang's road.
4. He doesn't avoid grandmotherly kindness. The skin on his face is three inches thick. He mingles and mixes with mud and water. He goes right up and takes him.

## COMMENTARY

Kuei Shan, Wu Feng, and Yun Yen were together attending on Pai Chang. Pai Chang asked Kuei Shan, "With your throat, mouth, and lips shut, how will you speak?" Shan said, "Please, Teacher, you speak instead." Chang said, "I don't refuse to

speak to you, but I fear that (if I did) in the future I would be bereft of descendants." Although Pai Chang acted like this, his pot had already been carried off by someone else. He also asked Wu Feng (this same question). Feng said, "Teacher, you too should shut up." Chang said, "Where there's no one, I shade my eyes with my hand and gaze out towards you." He also asked Yun Yen. Yen said, "Teacher, do you have (any way to speak) or not?" Chang said, "I have lost my descendants." Each of these three men was a Master.

An Ancient said, "On the level ground there are dead people without number. Those who can pass through the forest of brambles are the skillful ones." Therefore teachers of our school use the forest of brambles to test people. Why? They couldn't test people if they stuck to phrases based on ordinary feelings. Patchrobed monks must be able to display their ability in phrases and discern the point within words. As for board-carrying fellows, they often die within the words and say, "If throat, mouth, and lips are shut, there's no longer a way to say anything." As for those who can adapt successfully, they have waves which go against the current, they have a single road right in the question. They don't cut their hands blundering against its sharp point.

Kuei Shan said, "Please, Teacher, you speak instead." Tell me, what did he mean? Here he was like sparks struck from stone, like a flash of lightning: pressing back against Pai Chang's question, he answered immediately. He had his own way to get himself out, without wasting the slightest effort. Thus it is said, "He studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase."

Nevertheless, Pai Chang did not take him up on it, but just said, "I don't refuse to speak to you, but I fear that (if I did) in the future I would be bereft of descendants." Whenever teachers of our school help people, they pull out nails and extract pegs. As for people these days who say that this answer doesn't approve of Kuei Shan and doesn't comprehend his words, how far they are from knowing that right here is the one path of his living potential, towering up like a thousand-fathom wall, interchanging guest and host, leaping with life.

Hsueh Tou likes these words of Kuei Shan's, likes his freedom to revolve around and maneuver elegantly while still being able to hold fast to his territory. Therefore his verse says:

## VERSE

*"Please, Teacher, you speak instead."*

This contains the universe. He's already cut his hand  
against the sharp point.

*The tiger's head sprouts horns as he emerges from the wild  
weeds.*

Very startling indeed. Undeniably, he's extraordinary.

*On the ten continents spring ends and the flowers fade and  
wither—*

Everywhere is pure and cool. No praise is sufficient.

*Over the coral forest the sun is dazzling bright.*

(In the coral branches the light is reflected) a hundred-  
fold, a thousand-fold. Nevertheless, he can't be found on  
the tips of the hundred weeds. Kuei Shan's answer covers  
heaven and earth.

## COMMENTARY

The answers of these three men (to Pai Chang's question) are all different from each other. There's (Kuei Shan's) towering up like a thousand-fathom wall; there's (Wu Feng's) shining and functioning at the same time; and there's (Yun Yen's) who can't even save himself.

"Please, Teacher, you speak instead." Immediately in this one line Hsueh Tou has displayed his device. He goes farther into it and presses ever so lightly to make it easy for people to see by saying, "The tiger's head sprouts horns as he emerges from the wild weeds." Kuei Shan's answer seems to be placing horns on the head of a ferocious tiger—is there any way to approach it?

Haven't you heard? A monk asked Lo Shan, "How is it when they are born together and die together?" Shan said, "Like an ox without horns." The monk asked, "How is it when they are born together but don't die together?" Shan said, "Like a tiger wearing horns."

Though Hsueh Tou has completed the verse in one couplet, he has ample talent to turn around and change. He goes on and says, "On the ten continents spring ends and the flowers fade

and wither." On the ocean there are ten continents where one hundred years make one spring. Hsueh Tou's words have graceful elegance, turning freely with great ease. When the spring is over, hundreds of thousands of myriad flowers fade and wither all at once. Only the coral tree forest doesn't fade and wither—it takes the light of the sun and reflects it back and forth (among the branches). At just such a time it is amazing indeed! Hsueh Tou uses this to illuminate Kuei Shan's saying, "Please, Teacher, you speak instead."

# Wu Feng's Shut Up, Teacher

## CASE

Pai Chang also asked Wu Feng, "With your throat, mouth, and lips shut, how will you speak?"<sup>1</sup>

Feng said, "Teacher, you too should shut up."<sup>2</sup>

Chang said, "Where there's no one, I shade my eyes with my hand and gaze out towards you."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. Hahaha! The arrow has gone past Korea.
2. He captures the banner and carries off the drum. With a single phrase he cuts off the flow and puts to rest myriad impulses.
3. Where the land is broad and the population sparse, those met with are few.

## COMMENTARY

Kuei Shan held fast to his territory—Wu Feng cut off the myriad streams. For this bit one must be a fellow who takes it up directly, like a head-on clash in the front lines. There's no room for hesitation. Wu Feng functions directly and immediately: (his reply) is urgent and swift, perilous and steep. He's not like Kuei Shan who is so relaxed and easy-going and exuberant.

Followers of Ch'an these days just move under the shelf, unable to go beyond him. Thus it is said, "If you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with questions."

Wu Feng's answer cut him off immediately; undeniably it was fast and brilliant. Pai Chang said, "Where there's no one, I shade my eyes with my hand and gaze out towards you." But say, is this approving of Wu Feng or not? Is it killing or bringing to life? Seeing him turn so smoothly, Pai Chang just was giving him a check.

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

VERSE

*"Teacher, you too should shut up."*

Already present before the words. It cuts off the myriad streams.

*Observe Wu Feng's strategy on the dragon and snake battle lines—*

It takes the golden drum and serrated banner (of a great general) to be able to do this. He's fully equipped: he's an expert accustomed to battle.

*He makes people think of General Li Kuang.*

There aren't many with such marvelous skill. With his horse and spear (he covers) a thousand miles, ten thousand miles, and (defeats) a thousand men, ten thousand men.

*Over the ten-thousand-mile horizon a single kingfisher hawk soars.*

Does everyone see? But say, where does it alight? On target. I'll hit saying, "It's flown past."

COMMENTARY

"Teacher, you too should shut up." In one line Hsueh Tou gives a push and says, "Observe his strategy on the dragon and snake battle lines." It is as though Wu Feng set out two battle lines to burst out and to burst in. He has the ability of a battle commander, unrestrained in all directions. A man with a grand strategy is free to appear and disappear with his horse and spear up on the dragon and snake battle lines. How would you be able to surround him? If you're not this kind of person, how will you know that there is this kind of strategy?

In all these three verses (70, 71, and 72) of Hsueh Tou's, what he describes within them is like this, like Li Kuang's miraculous arrows.<sup>a</sup> "Over the ten-thousand-mile horizon a single kingfisher hawk soars." That one arrow fells one eagle is certain: there's no more (chance of) escape. In Hsueh Tou's

verse, Pai Chang's question is like a kingfisher hawk—Wu Feng's answer is like an arrow. I have been so occupied with praising Wu Feng that without realizing it my whole body has been immersed in mud and water.

TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. A renowned archer and great general, Li Kuang had a long career fighting the Huns on the northern frontiers for the Western Han Dynasty in the middle of the second century B.C. See the commentary to the verse in case 4.

# Pai Chang Questions Yun Yen

## CASE

Pai Chang also asked Yun Yen, "With your throat, mouth, and lips shut, how will you speak?"<sup>1</sup>

Yen said, "Teacher, do you have (any way to speak) or not?"<sup>2</sup>

Chang said, "I have lost my descendants."<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. "Come out of your hole, frog." What is he saying?
2. Sticking to his skin, clinging to his bones. Mud and water is streaming off him. Ahead he doesn't reach the village, behind he doesn't get to the shop.
3. Obviously with an answer like this, half is in front and half is left behind.

## COMMENTARY

Yun Yen was an attendant for twenty years at Pai Chang. Later he went along with Tao Wu to Yao Shan. Shan asked him, "When you were in Pai Chang's congregation, what was your purpose?" Yen said, "To escape birth and death." Shan said, "Have you escaped yet or not?" Yen said, "There's no birth and death for this one." Shan said, "Twenty years at Pai Chang and your force of habit still hasn't been cleared away yet." Yen took his leave and went to see Nan Ch'uan. Later he returned to Yao Shan and at last understood and was enlightened.

Look how the ancient man Yun Yen studied and investigated for twenty years and still was half green and half yellow (unripe). He stuck to his skin and clung to his bones, and couldn't break through. He was indeed this way; in fact, ahead he didn't reach the village, behind he didn't get to the shop. Haven't you heard it said:



*If your words do not leave the old clichés,  
 How will you be able to get out of what covers and  
 binds you?  
 White clouds lie athwart the valley mouth,  
 Making so many people miss the source.*

In the Ts'ao Tung tradition this is called "transgression." Thus they say, "Throw open the well-guarded phoenix tower but avoid transgressing (the prohibition against saying) the present emperor's name." Hence it is said, "To attain it is first necessary to pass beyond the forest of brambles. If you do not pass beyond it, then from beginning to end you will get stuck in subtleties without being able to cut them off."

As I just said, "Ahead he didn't reach his village, behind he didn't get to his shop." Yun Yen just went to test the other man's depths. When Pai Chang saw him acting like this, he immediately held him and struck him dead.

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

#### VERSE

*"Teacher, do you have (any way to speak) or not?"*

The case is perfectly manifest. Yun Yen was following the waves, pursuing the ripples, mixing with mud, mingling with water.

*The golden-haired lion is not crouching on the ground.*

Obviously. What's the use? Too bad!

*Two by two, three by three, travelling the old road—*

"With your throat, mouth, and lips shut, how will you speak?" Turn around and show some spirit! Though it was right under his feet, he missed it.

*On Ta Hsiung Mountain Pai Chang snapped his fingers in  
 vain.<sup>a</sup>*

Once dead Yun Yen did not come back to life again. Too bad! Too sad! Hsueh Tou adds more grief to his cry of woe.

## COMMENTARY

“ ‘Teacher, do you have (any way to speak) or not?’ / The golden-haired lion is not crouching on the ground.” Hsueh Tou concludes the case on the basis of the facts. Yun Yen is indeed one, but this golden-haired lion nevertheless is not crouching on the ground (ready to spring). When a lion captures its prey, it conceals its teeth, hides its claws, and crouches on the ground to rear back (and leap). Whether the prey is large or small, a lion always uses his whole power, wanting to complete his deed.

When Yun Yen said, “Teacher, do you have (any way to speak) or not?” he was just travelling on his former road. That’s why Hsueh Tou says that Pai Chang snapped his fingers in vain on Ta Hsiung Mountain.

## TRANSLATORS’ NOTES

- a. One snaps one’s fingers at someone to make him wake up.

# Ma Tsu's Permutations of Assertion and Denial

## POINTER

In explaining the Dharma, there is neither explanation nor teaching; in listening to the Dharma, there is neither hearing nor attainment. Since explanation neither explains nor teaches, how can it compare to not explaining? Since listening neither hears nor attains, how can it compare to not listening? Still, no explaining and no listening still amount to something.

As for all of you right here, listening to me explain here, how will you avoid this mistake? For those with the eye to pass through the barrier, as a test, I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Grand Master Ma, "Please, Teacher, going beyond the permutations of assertion and denial, directly point out to me the meaning of the coming from the West."<sup>1</sup>

Master Ma said, "I'm tired today and can't explain for you. Go ask Chih Tsang."<sup>2</sup>

When the monk asked Chih Tsang,<sup>3</sup> Tsang said, "Why didn't you ask the Teacher?"<sup>4</sup> The monk said, "The Teacher had me come here to ask you."<sup>5</sup> Tsang said, "I have a headache today and can't explain for you. Go ask Elder Brother Hai."<sup>6</sup> When the monk asked Elder Brother Hai (Pai Chang),<sup>7</sup> Hai said, "At this point, after all, I don't understand."<sup>8</sup>

When the monk related this to Grand Master Ma,<sup>9</sup> Master Ma said, "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black."<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. Where did he get this question from? Where did he get this news?
2. He retreats three paces. The monk has stumbled past without

realizing it. Ma hides his body but reveals his shadow. Undeniably this old fellow Ma has passed the buck to someone else.

3. He should have pressed Ma. He's stumbled past without realizing it.
4. The scorched-tail tiger has come out of the weeds. What is he saying? In fact, the monk is binding himself with straw ropes—he's totally dead.
5. He's at the disposal of someone else. The first arrow was still light, but the second arrow is deep.
6. It seems that the eighty-four men of knowledge (produced by Ma Tsu) all suffer from this kind of sickness.
7. Again the monk passes it to someone else. Clutching the loot, he cries out that he's been wronged.
8. He doesn't make a fuss. At any rate, the obscurity extends endlessly, forever and ever.
9. Despite everything, this monk does have a little eyesight.
10. In the heart of the realm, the emperor commands; outside the passes, the generals give orders.

#### COMMENTARY

In the old days when I studied with Chen Chueh in Ch'eng Tu (in Szechuan), Chueh said of this case, "You just need to look at Ma Tsu's first line and you will naturally understand all at once." Tell me, did this monk understand when he asked, or did he ask not understanding? This question of his is undeniably profound and far-reaching.

As for going beyond the permutations of assertion and denial, the four basic propositions are: 'it exists,' 'it doesn't exist,' 'it neither exist nor doesn't exist,' and 'it both exists and doesn't exist.' When you depart from these four propositions, you cut off their hundred negations. But if you just occupy yourself making up theories, you won't recognize the point of the story—you'll be looking for your head without seeing it.

If it had been me, I'd have waited until Ma Tsu had spoken, then unrolled my mat and bowed three times, to see how he would have responded. If I had been Ma Tsu at that time, when I saw this monk come up and ask, "Please, Teacher, going beyond the permutations of affirmation and denial, directly point out to me the meaning of the coming from the West," I

would have brought my staff down across his back and driven him out with blows, to see if he would awaken or not.

Grand Master Ma just created complications for him. When this fellow was right in front of it and stumbled past missing it, Ma Tsu still directed him to go ask Chih Tsang. The monk really didn't know that Grand Master Ma profoundly discerns oncoming winds. The monk went in ignorance to ask Chih Tsang. Tsang said, "Why didn't you ask the Teacher?" The monk said, "The Teacher had me come here to ask you." Watch this bit of his: when pressed, he immediately turns without wasting any more time. Chih Tsang said, "I have a headache today and can't explain for you. Go ask Elder Brother Hai."

This monk went to ask Elder Brother Hai, who said, "At this point, after all, I don't understand." But say, why did one man say he had a headache and one man say he didn't understand? In the end, what's what? This monk then came back and related this to Grand Master Ma. The Master said, "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black."

If you figure this by way of intellectual interpretation, then you would say that they were fooling the monk. Some say that is was all just buck-passing. Some say that all three knew the monk's question, and therefore they didn't answer. All such interpretations amount to clapping your hands over your eyes and putting poison into the excellent-flavored pure ghee of the Ancients.

Thus Ma Tsu said (to Layman P'ang), "When you swallow all the water in West River in one gulp, then I'll explain to you." This is the same as the present case. If you can understand "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black," then you can understand this talk about West River's water.

This monk took his load of confusion and exchanged it for uneasiness: he went on troubling these three adepts, making them enter the mud and water. In the end this monk didn't catch a glimpse of it. Although it was like this throughout, nevertheless these three masters of our school were exposed by a board-carrying fellow.

People these days just go to the words to make their living. They say that white refers to merging in brightness, while black refers to merging in darkness. Just occupying themselves with pursuing their calculations, such people are far from

knowing that the ancient Ma Tsu cuts off their intellectual faculties with a single line. You must go to the true lifeline and look for yourself before you can gain firm accord. Therefore Ma Tsu said, "With the last word you finally get to the impenetrable barrier." If you cut off the essential crossing place, you don't let profane or holy pass. If you discuss this matter, it's like having a sword pressing against your forehead—hesitate and you lose your body and your life. Again, it's said, "It's like hurling a sword into the sky—it's not a question of whether it reaches or not." Just go to the place of glistening clarity to understand.

Haven't you heard of the Ancients saying "You tub of lacquer!" or "Wild fox spirit!" or "Blind man!"? Tell me, is this the same as, or different from, a blow or a shout? If you know that the myriad differences and distinctions are all one, then naturally you will be able to take on opponents on all sides. Do you want to understand "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black"? My late teacher Wu Tsu said, "Mr. Dustsweeper."

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

#### VERSE

*"Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black."*

Half closed, half open. One hand lifts up, one hand presses down. The sound of gold bells, the flourish of jewel chimes.

*Clear-eyed patchrobed monks cannot understand.*

Go travel for thirty more years. It ends with your nostrils being pierced by someone else. Because of this, my mouth seems to be in a frown.

*The Colt has trampled everyone on earth to death—*

Among all the monasteries, only this old fellow Ma could do this. Bring this old fellow out!

*Lin Chi isn't yet a thief who can steal in broad daylight.*

A leper drags along his companions. Even though Ma Tsu and Lin Chi are experts, they've been caught by another person, Hsueh Tou.

*Going beyond the four propositions and cutting off their  
hundred negations—*

What is he saying? You too must check into this and see  
for yourself. "Poppa" resembles "daddy."

*Among gods and humans only I know.*

Why use "I"? I'll snatch away your staff. If there's no self  
and no others, no gain and no loss, what will you use to  
know?

#### COMMENTARY

"'Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black.'" But say, what does this mean? The world's patchrobed monks can't leap clear of this little bit. Look at how well Hsueh Tou closes up tight at the end: he says that even if you're a clear-eyed patchrobed monk you still won't be able to understand. This bit of news is called the hidden secret of the spiritual immortals which is not passed on from father to son. After old Shakyamuni had preached the teachings of his entire lifetime, at the end he specially transmitted the mind seal. It is called the Diamond King's jewel sword;<sup>a</sup> it is called the Rank of the Correct.<sup>b</sup> Such complications were a matter that couldn't be avoided—(with them) the Ancients showed a little of their sharp point. If you are a person who can pass through, then you will pierce and penetrate to attain the great independence. If you can't pass through, then as before there is no place for you to awaken and enter, and the more you talk the farther away you are.

"The Colt has trampled everyone on earth to death." Back in India Prajnatarā prophesied to Bodhidharma (of Ma Tsu) saying, "Though China is vast, there is no other road: it will run in the footsteps of your descendants. A golden rooster will know how to take a grain of millet in his beak and offer sustenance to the arhats of the ten directions."<sup>c</sup> In addition, the Sixth Patriarch said to (Ma Tsu's teacher) Master Jang, "Hereafter the Buddha Dharma will go forth from you. In the future you will produce a colt who will trample everyone on earth to death." After this he did spread the teaching over the whole country as the Dharma successor in Kiangsi—at the time he was called Ma

Tsu. Thus both Bodhidharma and the Sixth Patriarch predicted Ma Tsu in advance. Look how his way of doing things was, as it turned out, special—he just said, "Tsang's head is white, Hai's head is black." This is where to see how he tramples everyone on earth to death. A thousand men, ten thousand men can't bite through this one line about black and white.

"Lin Chi isn't yet a thief who can steal in broad daylight." One day Lin Chi taught his assembly saying, "In this red lump of flesh there is a true man without station. He's constantly going in and out through all of your senses. Those who haven't yet experienced this—look! look!" At the time there was a monk who came forward and asked, "What is the true man without station?" Lin Chi came down from the meditation platform and grabbed the monk tightly saying, "Speak! Speak!" The monk was speechless. Lin Chi pushed him away and said, "The true man without station—what a dry piece of shit he is!" Later Hsueh Feng heard of this and said, "Lin Chi greatly resembles a thief who steals in broad daylight."

Hsueh Tou wants to meet that Lin Chi, but in observing Ma Tsu's active edge, it is certainly superior to Lin Chi's. Ma Tsu is truly a thief who steals in broad daylight; Lin Chi is not yet one. Hsueh Tou has pierced them both at once.

Turning to versify this monk, Hsueh Tou says, "Going beyond the four propositions and cutting off their hundred negations—/Among gods and humans only I know." But don't go into the ghost cave to make your living! An Ancient said, "The question is in the answer, the answer is in the question." This monk was already extraordinary—how will you be able to go beyond the four propositions and cut off their hundred negations? Hsueh Tou says, "Only I know this matter." Even the Buddhas of past, present, and future cannot catch sight of it. Since each one must know for himself alone, what are all of you looking for when you keep on coming up here (to listen to me)?

Chen Ju of Ta Kuei commented, "This monk asking this way and Ma Tsu answering this way went beyond the permutations of assertion and denial. Chih Tsang and Elder Brother Hai didn't realize it at all."

Want to understand? Haven't you heard it said?—"The Colt has trampled everyone on earth to death."



## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The Diamond King's jewel sword is a symbol of *prajna*, transcendent wisdom.
- b. The Rank of the Correct symbolizes emptiness, *nirvana*; see the appendix on the devices of Tung Shan.
- c. Prajnatarā was Bodhidharma's teacher, the Twenty-Seventh Indian Patriarch. "There is no other road" refers to Ma Tsu, whose Dharma name was Tao I, "The Path is one." "A golden rooster" refers to Ma Tsu's teacher, Master Huai Jang of Nan Yueh, a man from Chin Chou ("Gold Prefecture"); like a rooster who naturally knows how to crow at the right time, Huai Jang knew when to appear in the world to cause the Dharma to flourish. The "grain of millet" means the specially transmitted mind seal. The colt in Hsueh Tou's verse and in the Sixth Patriarch's prediction to Huai Jang, of course, means Ma Tsu: in Chinese, "Ma" means horse.

## Chin Niu's Rice Pail

## POINTER

Wielding a sharp sword horizontally, he cuts off the nest of trailing vines in front of his point. Hanging a clear mirror on high, he brings forth Vairocana's seal within a phrase. Where one's state is secure within, one wears clothes and eats food. Where spiritual powers wander at play, how can one linger? Have you fully mastered it? Look at what's written below:

## CASE

Every day at mealtime, Master Chin Niu would personally take the rice pail and do a dance in front of the monks' hall: laughing aloud, he would say, "Bodhisattvas, come eat!"<sup>1</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "Though he acted like this, Chin Niu was not good-hearted."<sup>2</sup>

A monk asked Ch'ang Ch'ing, "When the man of old said, 'Bodhisattvas, come eat!' what was his meaning?"<sup>3</sup> Ch'ing said, "Much like joyful praise on the occasion of a meal."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. "You may play with the fishing line as you will—without disturbing the clear waves, its meaning is naturally distinct." He applies pure ghee and poison at the same time—and he's right! Jewels and gems he arrays all at once, but what can he do?—those he meets with are few.
2. This is a thief recognizing a thief, a spirit recognizing a spirit. If someone comes to talk of right and wrong, then he's a right and wrong person.
3. Indeed, anyone would have doubts about this. From the beginning, he hasn't known where Chin Niu is at. What will Ch'ang Ch'ing say?

4. He sizes up the audience to give his order, and wraps up the case on the basis of the facts.

### COMMENTARY

Chin Niu was a venerable adept descended from Ma Tsu. Every day at mealtime he would personally take the rice pail and do a dance in front of the monks' hall: laughing aloud, he would say, "Bodhisattvas, come eat!" He did this for twenty years. Tell me, where was his intent? Was he just summoning the others to eat? He always struck the (wooden) fish and beat the drum (for mealtimes) and also personally announced it. So what further need was there for him to take the rice pail and do so many tricks? Wasn't he crazy? Wasn't he "expounding by design"? If he was expounding this matter, why didn't he mount the jewel flower throne to "knock on the seat and hold up the whisk"? Why did he need to act like this?

People today are far from knowing that the Ancients' meaning was outside of words. Why not then take a brief look at the stated purpose for the Patriarchal Teacher's first coming here? What was it? It was clearly explained: for a separate transmission outside the verbal teachings, to transmit individually the mind seal. The ancient man Chin Niu's expedient methods too were just to make you directly receive this. Later people would vainly calculate on their own and say, "Why so many concerns? When cold, turn toward the fire; when hot, take advantage of the cool shade; when hungry, eat; when tired, get some sleep." If we interpreted meanings this way, on the basis of ordinary feelings, to explain and comment, then the whole school of Bodhidharma would have been wiped off the face of the earth. Don't you realize that twenty-four hours a day, from moment to moment, the Ancients never gave up wanting to understand This Matter?

Hsueh Tou said, "Though he acted like this, Chin Niu was not good-hearted." Many people misunderstand this line. That which is called the supreme flavor of pure ghee is converted, on encountering such people, into poison. Since Chin Niu descended into the weeds to help people, why did Hsueh Tou say that he wasn't good-hearted? Why did he talk this way? Patch-robed monks must have living potential to begin to understand this.

People today don't get to the Ancient's realm—they just say, "What mind is there to see? What Buddha is there?" If you construct such views you have destroyed the old adept, Chin Niu. It takes thorough observation to begin to understand. If today and tomorrow you go on with such facile explanations, you'll never be finished.

Later when Ch'ang Ch'ing had gone up to his seat, a monk asked, "When the ancient man said, 'Bodhisattvas, come eat!' what was his meaning?" Ch'ing said, "Much like joyful praise on the occasion of a meal." The honored worthy Ch'ang Ch'ing was extremely compassionate—he leaked and tarried quite a bit. In truth it was "joyful praise on the occasion of a meal." But you tell me, rejoicing over what?

Look at Hsueh Tou's verse which says:

#### VERSE

*Laughing aloud in the shadow of the white clouds,*

In his laugh, there's a knife. Why the enthusiasm? The world's patchrobed monks don't know where he comes down.

*He lifts it up with both hands to give to them.*

How can there be such things? Better not slander Chin Niu! Can it be called a rice pail? If you are a legitimate patchrobed monk in your own right, you don't eat this kind of food.

*If they were sons of the golden-haired lion,*

They must first be beyond patterns. I'll allow that they had eyes, but I only fear that their eyes were not true.

*They would have seen the deception from three thousand miles away.*

It wasn't worth half a cent. A scene of leaking and tarrying. Where was the deception? Blind men!

#### COMMENTARY

"Laughing aloud in the shadow of the white clouds." Ch'ang Ch'ing says, "Joyful praise on the occasion of a meal." Hsueh

Tou says, "He lifts it up with both hands to give to them." But say, was he just giving them food to eat, or do you think that there must have been something special besides? If you can know the true point here, then you're a son of the golden-haired lion. If they had been sons of the golden-haired lion, then there would have been no more need for Chin Niu to take the rice pail, do a dance, and laugh aloud—in fact they would have known his mistake immediately from three thousand miles away.

An Ancient said, "Perceive before the act and you won't have to use the least bit of effort." Thus patchrobed monks must always function outside of patterns before they can be called genuine Masters of our school. If they just base themselves on words and speech, they won't avoid leaking and tarrying in indulgent attachments.

# Wu Chiu's Unjust Beating

## POINTER

The subtle point, the jewel sword, perpetually revealed, present in front of us. It can kill people and it can bring people life. It's there and it's here, gaining and losing together with us. If you want to pick it up, you're free to pick it up; if you want to put it down, you're free to put it down.

But say, what's it like when not falling into guest and host, when interchanging without getting stuck? To test, I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk came to Wu Chiu from the congregation of the Master of Ting Chou. Wu Chiu asked, "How does Ting Chou's Dharma Path compare to here?"<sup>1</sup> The monk said, "It's not different."<sup>2</sup> Chiu said, "If it's not different, then you should go back there," and then hit him.<sup>3</sup> The monk said, "There are eyes on the staff: you shouldn't carelessly hit people."<sup>4</sup> Chiu said, "Today I've hit one," and hit him again three times.<sup>5</sup> The monk thereupon went out.<sup>6</sup>

Chiu said, "All along there's been someone receiving an unjust beating."<sup>7</sup> The monk turned around and said, "What can I do? The handle is in your hands, Teacher."<sup>8</sup> Chiu said, "If you want, I'll turn it over to you."<sup>9</sup> The monk came up to Chiu, grabbed the staff out of his hands, and hit him three times.<sup>10</sup> Chiu said, "An unjust beating, an unjust beating!"<sup>11</sup> The monk said, "There's someone receiving it."<sup>12</sup>

Chiu said, "I hit this fellow carelessly."<sup>13</sup> Immediately the monk bowed.<sup>14</sup> Chiu said, "Yet you act this way."<sup>15</sup> The monk laughed loudly and went out.<sup>16</sup> Chiu said, "That's all it comes to, that's all it comes to."<sup>17</sup>

NOTES

1. There's an echo in his words. He must distinguish shallow from deep. (The question is like) a probing pole, a reed shade. He's really deceiving the man!
2. Among the dead men there's a live one. One or a half. ("Not different") is the same as an iron spike. He's treading upon the ground of reality.
3. Obviously. The correct imperative must be carried out.
4. Only this adept could do this. After all, he's a lion cub.
5. What one is he talking about? (Why not hit) a thousand, ten thousand?
6. All along the monk's been a man of our house. In fact he has been wronged. He just sees his opportunity and goes.
7. A mute eating a bitter melon. Chiu both lets go and gathers in. What good is someone who turns back around when hit?
8. It's this way three hundred and sixty-five days a year. After all he is a clever patchrobed monk.
9. Who knows which of them is the prince and which is the minister? Chiu dares to lie down in the tiger's mouth. He really doesn't know good from evil.
10. Here again, only an adept Ch'an traveller could do this. Guest and host interchange, releasing or capturing according to the occasion.
11. Check! Why is this old fellow in such a rush?
12. Haha! How many handles are now in this monk's hands?
13. It doesn't come down on either side. Who knows who he is?
14. Only one who doesn't flinch when faced with danger is a man of power.
15. Check!
16. An adept Ch'an traveller naturally has (such ability). A fierce tiger must have a pure wind following him. Now we know that he finished the beginning and finished the end. No one on earth can get a grasp on him.
17. Too bad he let the monk go. Why didn't he bring his staff down across his back? Where do you think the monk went?

COMMENTARY

A monk came to Wu Chiu from the congregation of the Master of Ting Chou. Chiu was also an adept. If here all of you people

can realize that there was a single exit and a single entry for these two men, then a thousand or ten thousand is in fact just one. It is so, whether acting as host or as guest: in the end the two men merge together into one agent for one session of careful investigation. Whether as guest or host, whether asking or answering, from beginning to end both were adepts.

Look at Wu Chiu questioning this monk: "How does Ting Chou's Dharma Path compare to here?" The monk immediately said, "It's not different." At the time, if it hadn't been Wu Chiu, it would have been hard to cope with this monk. Chiu said, "If it's not different, then you should go back there," and then hit him. But what could he do? This monk was an adept and immediately said, "There are eyes on the staff: you shouldn't carelessly hit people." Chiu carried out the imperative thoroughly saying, "Today I've hit one," and hitting him again three more times. At this the monk went out. Observe how the two of them revolved so smoothly—both were adepts. To understand this affair it is necessary to distinguish initiate from lay, and tell right from wrong. Though this monk went out, the case was still not finished.

From beginning to end Wu Chiu wanted to test this monk's reality, to see how he was. But this monk had barred the door, so Chiu hadn't yet seen him. Then Wu Chiu said, "All along there's been someone receiving an unjust beating." This monk wanted to turn around and show some life, yet he didn't struggle with Wu Chiu, but turned around most easily and said, "What can I do? The handle is in your hands, Teacher." Being a Master of our school with an eye on his forehead, Wu Chiu dared to lay his body down in the fierce tiger's mouth and say, "If you want, I'll turn it over to you."

This monk was a fellow with a talisman under his arm. As it is said, "To see what is right and not do it is lack of bravery." Without hesitating any longer, the monk came up to Wu Chiu, grabbed the staff out of his hands, and hit him three times. When Chiu said, "An unjust beating, an unjust beating!" tell me, what did he mean? Before, Chiu said, "All along there's been someone receiving an unjust beating." But when the monk hit him he said, "An unjust beating, an unjust beating!" When the monk said, "There's someone receiving it," Chiu said, "I hit this fellow carelessly." Chiu said before that he had hit a person carelessly. Afterwards, when he had taken a beat-



ing himself, why did he also say, "I hit this fellow carelessly"? If it hadn't been for this monk's independent resurgence, he couldn't have been able to handle Wu Chiu.

Then the monk bowed. This bow was extremely poisonous—it wasn't good-hearted. If it hadn't been Wu Chiu, he wouldn't have been able to see through this monk. Wu Chiu said to him, "Yet you act this way." The monk laughed loudly and went out. Wu Chiu said, "That's all it comes to, that's all it comes to."

Observe how all through the meeting of these adepts, guest and host are distinctly clear. Though cut off, they can still continue. In fact this is just an action of interchanging. Yet when they get here, they do not say that there is an interchange. Since these ancient men were beyond defiling feelings and conceptual thinking, neither spoke of gain or loss. Though it was a single session of talk, the two men were both leaping with life, and both had the needle and thread of our blood line. If you can see here, you too will be perfectly clear twenty-four hours a day.

When the monk (first) went out, this was both sides letting go. What happened after that was both sides gathering in. This is called interchanging. Hsueh Tou makes his verse just this way:

#### VERSE

*To summon is easy—*

Everyone on earth doubts this. Rancid meat attracts flies.  
None of the world's patchrobed monks know where this  
comes down.

*To send away is hard.*

Getting rid of them thoroughly (is hard). Mirages appear  
over the sea.

*Observe carefully the interchange of action points.*

One exit, one entry—both are adepts. Two men hold a  
single staff. But say, whose side is it on?

*The rock of ages though solid can still crumble—*

How will you handle the golden hammer up his sleeve?  
The thousand sages haven't transmitted it.

*When they stand in its depths the ocean must dry up.*

Where will this be arranged? There are eyes on the staff.  
I'll only allow that they have attained intimately.

*Old Wu Chiu! Old Wu Chiu!*

What a pity that this old fellow doesn't know good from evil.

*How many kinds?*

He's another fellow with no reasons (for what he does).  
Hundreds, thousands, myriads of miles.

*Indeed he had no reason for giving him the handle.*

Already so before the words. Wu Chiu's life was hanging  
by a thread. He deserves thirty blows. But say, where was  
his fault?

#### COMMENTARY

"To summon is easy—to send away is hard." It's all falling into the weeds. With his excessive compassion, Hsueh Tou would often say, "Calling snakes is easy; sending snakes away is hard." Right now if I were to take a (dried and hollow) gourd and blow through it, it would be easy to summon snakes, but when I wanted to send them away it would be hard. Similarly, it's easy to give one's staff to someone else, but to take it back from him and send him away is hard. You must have your own ability—only then will you be able to send him away.

Wu Chiu was an adept with the skill to call snakes and also the ability to send snakes away. This monk wasn't asleep either. When Wu Chiu asked, "How does Ting Chou's Dharma Path compare to here?"—this was calling him. When Wu Chiu then hit him, this was sending him away. When the monk said, "There are eyes on the staff: you shouldn't hit people carelessly"—this is the summoning transferred over to the monk's side. When Wu Chiu said, "If you want, I'll turn it over to you," and the monk then came up to Chiu, grabbed the staff out of his hands, and hit him three times—this was the monk sending him away. As for the monk laughing loudly and going out, and Wu Chiu saying, "That's all it comes to"—this clearly is each sending the other away appropriately.

Observe how these two exchanged action points, spinning with perfect continuity, fusing into one whole. From beginning

to end, guest and host are clearly distinct. Sometimes, though, host acts as guest and sometimes guest acts as host. Even Hsueh Tou cannot praise this enough. Thus he speaks of the act of interchange and has you people observe it carefully.

"The rock of ages though solid can still crumble." He speaks of this "rock of ages": it's 84,000 leagues wide and 84,000 leagues thick.<sup>a</sup> Every five hundred years a god comes down and brushes across it with a gossamer cloth, then departs for another five hundred years. The brushing continues like this until it wears the rock away—this makes one age called the "light cloth brushing across the rock" age. Hsueh Tou says, "The rock of ages though solid can still crumble." Though the rock is strong and solid, still it can be worn away to nothing. But the action point of these two men can never be obliterated over the ages.

"When they stand in its depths the ocean must dry up." Even the ocean, with its vast swelling billows flooding the skies, even the very ocean would inevitably dry up utterly if you have these two men stand within it. At this point Hsueh Tou has completed his verse all at once.

At the end he goes on to say, "Old Wu Chiu! Old Wu Chiu!/How many kinds?" Sometimes catching, sometimes letting go; sometimes killing, sometimes giving life—in the end, how many kinds is this? "Indeed he had no reason for giving him the handle." This staff has been used by all the Buddhas of past, present, and future, and by the successive generations of Patriarchal Teachers, and by the Masters of our school, to pull out nails and extract pegs for people, to loosen what is stuck and untie what is bound. How can it be given over to someone else lightly? Hsueh Tou means that it should be used by oneself alone. Fortunately it happened that this monk then just opened up to him—if he had suddenly stirred up thunder over dry ground, we would have observed how Chiu met it. When Wu Chiu passed him the handle, wasn't this indeed without any reason?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Yojana is a unit of distance: a day's march by the king and his retinue in ancient India; maybe ten or twenty miles.

# Tan Hsia's Have You Eaten Yet?

## POINTER

Fine as rice powder, cold as icy frost, it blocks off heaven and earth and goes beyond light and dark. Observe it where it's low and there's extra; level it off where it's high and there's not enough. Holding fast and letting go are both here, but is there a way to appear or not? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

Tan Hsia asked a monk, "Where have you come from?"<sup>1</sup> The monk said, "From down the mountain."<sup>2</sup> Hsia said, "Have you eaten yet or not?"<sup>3</sup> The monk said, "I have eaten."<sup>4</sup> Hsia said, "Did the person who brought you the food to eat have eyes or not?"<sup>5</sup> The monk was speechless.<sup>6</sup>

Ch'ang Ch'ing asked Pao Fu, "To give someone food to eat is ample requital of the debt of kindness: why wouldn't he have eyes?"<sup>7</sup> Fu said, "Giver and receiver are both blind."<sup>8</sup> Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "If they exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?"<sup>9</sup> Fu said, "Can you say that I'm blind?"<sup>10</sup>

## NOTES

1. It's truly impossible to have no place at all you've come from. If he wants to know where he's come from, it won't be hard.
2. He has put on his straw sandals and walked into your belly. It's just that you don't understand. There's an echo in his words, but he keeps it to himself. Is he yellow or green?
3. A second ladleful of foul water douses the monk. Why just the zero point of a scale? He wants to know the real truth.
4. As it turns out, he's collided with the pillar. After all, he's had his nostrils pierced by a bystander. From the beginning it's been an iron hammer head with no handle hole.

5. Although he is relying on his power to mystify the man, he is also wrapping up the case on the basis of the facts. At the time he deserved to have his meditation seat overturned. Why is there no reason for what he did?
6. After all, he couldn't run. If this monk had been an adept he would have said to him, "The same as your eyes, Teacher."
7. He's still only said half. Is it "throughout the body" or is it "all over the body"? One cut, two pieces. One hand lifts up, one hand presses down.
8. He acts according to the imperative. With one line he says it all. Such a man is rarely encountered.
9. What does he know of good and evil? He still isn't settled himself: what bowl is he looking for?
10. The two of them are both in the weeds. Fu has a dragon's head but a snake's tail. At the time when he said, "If they had exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?" I would have just said to him, "You're blind." Since they're both adepts, why is it that "ahead they didn't reach the village, behind they didn't get to the shop"?

#### COMMENTARY

"Tan Hsia" was Ch'an Master T'ien Jan of Tan Hsia in Teng Province of Honan—I don't know what locality he was from. At first he studied Confucianism, intending to go to Ch'ang-an to take part in the examinations for official posts. Then unexpectedly while he was staying over at a travellers' lodge, he dreamed that a white light filled the room. A diviner said, "This is an auspicious omen of understanding emptiness." There happened to be a Ch'an traveller there who asked him, "Good man, where are you going?" He said, "To be chosen to be an official." The Ch'an traveller said, "How can choosing an official career compare to choosing Buddhahood?" Tan Hsia asked, "What place should I go to to choose Buddhahood?" The Ch'an traveller said, "At the present time Grand Master Ma has appeared in the world in Kiangsi. This is the place to choose Buddhahood—you should go there, good man."

After this Tan Hsia went directly to Kiangsi. The moment he saw Grand Master Ma he lifted up the edge of his turban (to look at Ma). Master Ma observed him and said, "I am not your

Teacher—go to Shih T'ou's place in Nan Yueh." Tan Hsia hastened to Nan Yueh where he submitted to Shih T'ou with the same idea as before (at Ma Tsu's place). Shih T'ou told him to go to the stable, and Tan Hsia bowed in thanks. He entered the workmen's hall and worked along with the congregation for three years.

One day Shih T'ou announced to the assembly, "Tomorrow we're going to clear away the weeds in front of the Buddha's shrine." The next day everyone equipped himself with a hoe to cut down the weeds. Tan Hsia alone took a bowl, filled it with water, and washed his head; then he knelt in front of Master Shih T'ou. Shih T'ou saw this and laughed at him, then shaved his head for him. As Shih T'ou began to explain the precepts for him, Tan Hsia covered his ears and went out.

Then Tan Hsia headed for Kiangsi to call again on Ma Tsu. Before meeting with Ma Tsu to pay his respects, he went into the monks' hall and sat astride the neck of the holy statue (of Manjusri). At the time everybody became very perturbed and hurried to report this to Ma Tsu. Tsu personally went to the hall to have a look at him and said, "My son is so natural." Hsia immediately got down and bowed saying, "Thank you, Master, for giving me a Dharma name." Because of this he was called T'ien Jan (which means natural). This man of old Tan Hsia was naturally sharply outstanding like this. As it is said, "Choosing officialdom isn't as good as choosing Buddhahood." His sayings are recorded in the *Records of the Transmission of the Lamp*.

His words tower up like a thousand-fathom wall. Each and every line has the ability to pull out nails and extract pegs for people, like when he asked this monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From down the mountain," yet he didn't communicate where he had come from. It seemed that he had eyes and was going to reverse things and examine the host. If it hadn't been Tan Hsia, it would have been impossible to gather him in.

But Tan Hsia said, "Have you eaten yet or not?" At first he hadn't been able to see this monk at all, so this is the second attempt to examine him. The monk said, "I have eaten." From the beginning this confused and ignorant fellow hadn't understood. Hsia said, "Did the person who brought you the food to

eat have eyes or not?" and the monk was speechless. Tan Hsia's meaning was, "What's the use of giving food to such a fellow as you?" If this monk had been a fellow (with eyes) he would have given Tan Hsia a poke to see what he would do. Nevertheless, Tan Hsia still didn't let him go, so the monk was (left standing there) blinking stupidly and speechless.

When Pao Fu and Ch'ang Ch'ing were together in Hsueh Feng's congregation, they would often bring up the public cases of the Ancients to discuss. Ch'ang Ch'ing asked Pao Fu, "To give someone food is ample requital of kindness: why wouldn't he have eyes?" He didn't have to inquire exhaustively into the facts of the case; he could take it all in using these words to pose his question. He wanted to test Pao Fu's truth. Pao Fu said, "Giver and receiver are both blind." How direct! Here he just discusses the immediate circumstances—inside his house Pao Fu has a way to assert himself.

When Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "If they had exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?" Pao Fu said, "Can you say that I'm blind?" Pao Fu meant, "I have such eyes to have said it all to you—are you still saying I'm blind?" Nevertheless, it's half closed and half open. At that time if it had been me, when he said, "If they had exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?" I would have just said to him, "You're blind." What a pity! If Pao Fu had uttered this one word "blind" at that time, he would have avoided so many of Hsueh Tou's complications. Hsueh Tou too just uses this idea to make his verse:

#### VERSE

*(Ch'ang Ch'ing) exhausts his activity, (Pao Fu) doesn't become blind—*

They've only said half. Each wanted to test the other. The words are still in our ears.

*(Like) holding down an ox's head to make it eat grass.*

They lose their money and incur punishment. Half south of the river, half north of the river. Without realizing it, they've run afoul of the point and cut their hands.

*Twenty-eight and six Patriarchs—*

If you have a rule, hold on to the rule. Hsueh Tou is dragging down the former sages; he doesn't just involve one man.

*Their precious vessel is brought forth, but it turns out to be an error.*

Everyone on earth beats his breast (in sorrow). Give me back my staff. They've dragged me down so that I can't even show my face.

*The error is profound—*

Extremely profound. The world's patchrobed monks cannot leap clear of it. But tell me, how profound?

*There's no place to look for it.*

Though it's right beneath your feet, it can't be found.

*Gods and humans sink down together on dry land.*

The world's patchrobed monks are all buried in one pit. Is there anyone alive? I let my move go. Heavens! Heavens!

#### COMMENTARY

"(Ch'ang Ch'ing) exhausts his activity, (Pao Fu) doesn't become blind." Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "If they exhausted their activity, would they still turn out blind?" Pao Fu said, "Can you say that I'm blind?" This was all like "Holding down an ox's head to make it eat grass." To get it right you must wait till he eats on his own: how can you push down an ox's head and make him eat? When Hsueh Tou versifies like this, naturally we can see Tan Hsia's meaning.

"Twenty-eight and six Patriarchs—/Their precious vessel is brought forth, but it turns out to be an error." Not only does Hsueh Tou drag down Ch'ang Ch'ing, but at the same time he buries the twenty-eight Patriarchs of India and the six Patriarchs of this country. In forty-nine years, old man Shakyamuni preached the whole great treasurehouse of the Teachings; at the end he only transmitted this precious vessel. Yung Chia said, "This is not an empty exhibition displaying form: it's the actual traces of the Tathagata's jewel staff." If you adopt Pao Fu's view, then even if you bring forth the precious vessel, it all turns out to be an error.



"The error is profound—/There's no place to look for it." This can't be explained for you: just go sit quietly and inquire into his lines and see. Since the error is profound, why then is there no place to look for it? This is not a small mistake: he takes the Great Affair of the Buddhas and Patriarchs and submerges it entirely on dry land. Hence Hsueh Tou says, "Gods and humans sink down together on dry land."

# Yun Men's Cake

## POINTER

Turning upwards, he can pierce the nostrils of everyone on earth, like a falcon catching a pigeon. Turning downwards, his own nostrils are in the hands of other people, like a turtle hiding in its shell.

Here if someone suddenly comes forth and says, "Fundamentally, there is no upwards and downwards—what use is turning?" I simply say to him, "I know that you are going inside the ghost cave to make your living."

But say, how will you distinguish initiate from naive? After a silence, Yuan Wu said, "If you have precepts, go by the precepts; if you have no precepts, go by the example."

## CASE

A monk asked Yun Men, "What is talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs?"<sup>1</sup> Men said, "Cake."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. He opens up. Suddenly there's thunder over the parched earth. He presses.
2. The tongue is pressed against the roof of the mouth. It's gone by.

## COMMENTARY

This monk asked Yun Men, "What is talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs?" Men said, "Cake." Do you feel your hairs standing on end with the chill? Patchrobed monks have asked about Buddhas and asked about Patriarchs, asked about Ch'an and asked about Tao, asked about facing upwards and facing downwards—there's nothing more that can be asked,

yet this one posed a question and asked about talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs. Yun Men was an adept: thus, when the water rises, the boats ride high, and when there is much mud the Buddha-image is big. So he answered saying "Cake." It can be said that the Way is not carried out in vain, that his effort is not wasted.

Yun Men also taught the assembly saying, "Without any understanding, when you see people talking about the intent of the Patriarchal Teachers you immediately ask for theories of talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs. But what do you call 'Buddhas,' what do you call 'Patriarchs,' that you immediately speak of talk that transcends Buddhas and Patriarchs? Then you ask about escape from the triple world, but you take hold of the triple world to see. What seeing, hearing, feeling, and knowing are there to hinder you? What phenomena of sound and form are there that you can be made to understand? What 'bowl' do you know how to use? On what basis do you entertain views of differentiations? Those ancient sages can't do anything for you, though they extend themselves to help living beings. Even if they say that the whole Body is entirely real, that in everything we see the Essence—this is ungraspable. When I say to you, 'In fact, what concerns are there?' this has already buried it." If you can understand this statement, then you can recognize the "Cake."

Wu Tsu said, "Donkey shit is like horse shit." This is what Yung Chia called "Going direct to the root source, as the Buddhas have sealed—picking through leaves and searching through twigs I cannot do." When you get to this point, if you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with questions.

Observe how this monk asked, "What is talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs?" and Yun Men said, "Cake." Does Yun Men know shame? Is he aware of indulging? There's a type of phoney person who says, "Yun Men saw the rabbit and released the hawk; thus he said 'Cake.''" If you take such a view, that "Cake" is talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs, how can there be a living road? Don't understand it as cake and don't understand it as going beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs—this, then, is the living road. (Yun Men's "Cake") is the same as (Tung Shan's) "Three pounds of hemp" (Case 12) and (Ho Shan's) "Knowing how to beat the drum" (Case 44): though he just said "Cake," its reality is hard to see.

Later people often made up rationalizations and said, "Coarse words and subtle talk all come back to the primary truth." If you understand in this fashion, just go be a lecturer and spend your life collecting much knowledge and many interpretations. Followers of Ch'an these days say, "When you go beyond the Buddhas and Patriarchs you are trampling both Buddhas and Patriarchs underfoot—that's why Yun Men just said to him, 'Cake.'" Since it's "Cake," how does this explain going beyond the Buddhas and Patriarchs? Try to investigate thoroughly and see.

In the various places the verses about this case are extremely numerous, but they all go to the side of the question to make their comment. Hsueh Tou alone has versified it the best—naturally he's outstanding. The verse says:

#### VERSE

*Ch'an travellers asking about transcendent talk are especially numerous.*

One after another they come forth and make up this kind of view, (numerous as) hemp or millet.

*His gap opens—see it!*

Already open before the words. Hsueh Tou doesn't notice the smell of his own shit.

*Even the cake stuffed in doesn't stop him.*

He's replaced your eyes with wooden beads.

*Up till now there has been confusion all over the world.*

I'll draw a circle and say, "Haven't you been understanding this way?" What end is there to chewing over the words of others? The great earth is desolate, killing people with sadness, so I'll hit.

#### COMMENTARY

"Ch'an travellers asking about transcendent talk are especially numerous." Followers of Ch'an are especially fond of asking about this saying ("talk that goes beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs"). Haven't you heard? Yun Men said, "All of you carry

a staff across your shoulders and say, 'I am immersed in meditation, I am studying the Path,' and then go looking for a truth that goes beyond the Buddhas and Patriarchs. But I ask you, during the twenty-four hours of the day, when walking, standing, sitting, and lying down; when shitting and pissing among the vermin in a roadside privy; when at the counter of the butcher's stall in the market; is there still any truth that goes beyond the Buddhas and Patriarchs? Let those who can speak of it come forward. If there isn't anyone (who can), then don't stop me from acting this way and that as I please." Then Yun Men went down from his seat.

Some can no longer tell right from wrong—they draw a circle, adding mud to dirt, putting on chains while wearing stocks. "His gap opens—see it?" What a big gap there is in this monk posing his question! Yun Men saw it opening up in his question, so he said "Cake" to block it up tight. But this monk still wouldn't agree to stop—instead, he went on asking. Thus Hsueh Tou says, "Even the cake stuffed in doesn't stop him."

"Up till now there has been confusion all over the world." Followers of Ch'an these days just go to "Cake" to understand, or else they go to "beyond Buddhas and Patriarchs" to make up theories. Since it's not in these two places, in the end, where is it? Thirty years from now, when I've exchanged my bones, I'll tell you.

# Sixteen Bodhisattvas Go In to Bathe

## CASE

In olden times there were sixteen bodhisattvas.<sup>1</sup> When it was time for monks to wash, the bodhisattvas filed in to bathe.<sup>2</sup> Suddenly they awakened to the basis of water.<sup>3</sup> All of you Ch'an worthies, how will you understand their saying, "Subtle feeling reveals illumination,<sup>4</sup> and we have achieved the station of sons of Buddha"?<sup>5</sup> To realize this you too must be extremely piercing and penetrating.<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. What's the use of forming a crowd? This bunch of idiots!
2. They've collided with the pillar. Why such lacquer tubs?
3. Suddenly their heads are soaked with foul water.
4. It's no longer anyone else's business. How will you understand them? "Having knocked it down, it's nothing else."
5. Here the world's patchrobed monks seek but cannot find. Why two heads, three faces?
6. One blow with the staff, one welt. Better not turn your back on me! You're colliding with it, you're bumping into it. Have you ever seen Te Shan and Lin Chi?

## COMMENTARY

At the Surangama Assembly, Bhadrupala and the sixteen bodhisattvas all practiced pure conduct and each related the basis on which he had experienced the Dharma gate of perfect pervasiveness. This is numbered as one among twenty-five (kinds of) perfect pervasiveness. (They related that) when it was time for monks to bathe they had filed in to bathe and suddenly awakened to the basis of water. Since they didn't wash off the dirt, and they didn't wash their bodies, tell me, what did they wash? If you can understand, then, at peace within, you realize

the absence of anything existing. Then a thousand or ten thousand will no longer be able to get near you. As it is said, "Absence of attainment is true wisdom; if there is something which is attained, this is just semblance wisdom."

Haven't you heard? Bodhidharma said to the Second Patriarch, "Bring out your mind and I will pacify it for you." The Second Patriarch said, "When I search for my mind, I can't find it." This little bit here is the basic root of patchrobed monks' lives. There's no more need at all for so many complications: all that's needed is to speak of suddenly awakening to the basis of water, and you spontaneously understand properly.

Since they didn't wash off the dust, and they didn't wash their bodies, tell me, what did they awaken to? When you get to this realm, nothing at all is applicable—even the word "Buddha" must be avoided. They said, "Subtle feeling reveals illumination, and we have achieved the station of sons of Buddha." "Reveals" means "makes apparent." The subtle feeling is illumination. Once you awaken to the subtle feeling, then you achieve the station of sons of Buddha, that is, you are in the stage of Buddhahood.

People these days also go in to bathe, they also wash in water and feel it this way. Why then don't they awaken? They are all confused and obstructed by the objects of the senses: they stick to their skins and cling to their bones. That's why they can't wake up immediately then and there. Here, if there's nothing attained in washing or feeling or in the basis of water, then tell me, is this "Subtle feeling reveals illumination" or not? If here you can see directly, then this is "Subtle feeling reveals illumination, and we achieve the station of sons of Buddha." People these days feel too, but do they perceive its subtlety? Subtle feeling is not ordinary feeling and feeler, where contact is considered feeling and separation is not.

When Hsuan Sha was crossing the mountains and stubbed his toe (thereupon awakening), when Te Shan hits—isn't this subtle feeling? Although it is so, to realize this you must be extremely piercing and penetrating. If you just search on your body, what connection is there? If you are extremely piercing and penetrating, then what need is there to go in and wash? You will make the jewel king's realm appear on the tip of a hair and turn the great Dharma Wheel in every speck of dust. If you can penetrate in one place, then you penetrate a thousand places, ten thousand places all at once. Don't just hold onto

a single nook or den—all places are the gates by which Avalokitesvara enters the truth.

For the Ancients too there was "awakening to the Path by hearing sounds, illuminating Mind by seeing forms." If a single man awakens, this is the reason. But why did the sixteen bodhisattvas awaken at the same time? Because the Ancients practiced together and experienced together, awakened together and understood together. Hsueh Tou picks up the meaning of their teaching to make people go to where "Subtle feeling reveals illumination" to understand. But Hsueh Tou goes beyond the eye of their teaching to let people avoid being trapped within the net of the teaching, half-drunk and half-sober. He wants to make people directly become clean, free, and unbound. The verse says:

#### VERSE

*I only need one patchrobed monk who understands this matter—*

There's one right here. I'll give him three thousand blows in the morning and eight hundred blows at night. Leap out of the unbreakable trap! Not even one is needed.

*Stretch out your legs on the long-bench and lie down.*

After all he's a sleepyhead. For eons he never discusses Ch'an.

*In a dream you once spoke of awakening to perfect pervasiveness—*

Already asleep, he goes on to speak of dreams. Yet I'll allow that he has seen it in dreams. Why the talking in his sleep?

*Though you've washed in fragrant water, I'll spit right in your face.*

Bah! He adds another layer of mud on top of the dirt. Don't come and shit on the clean ground!

#### COMMENTARY

"I only need one patchrobed monk who understands this matter." But say, understands what matter? Once they hear it



mentioned, adept Ch'an travellers immediately go carry it out. It just takes one such patchrobed monk—what's the use of forming a crowd?

"Stretch out your legs on the long-bench and lie down." An Ancient said, "In clear illumination, there is no such thing as awakening. (The concept of) 'having awakened' turns around and deludes people. When you stretch out both feet and sleep, there's no false and there's no true—thus, there isn't a single concern in one's heart. When hungry, one eats; when tired, one sleeps."

Hsueh Tou means that if you speak of going in to wash and awakening to "Subtle feeling reveals illumination," from the standpoint of this kind of unconcerned patchrobed monk, this is just like speaking of a dream in a dream. That's why Hsueh Tou says, "In a dream you once spoke of awakening to perfect pervasiveness—Though you've washed in fragrant water, I'll spit right in your face." Though it seems like fragrant water, in fact it's foul water suddenly soaking your head. What "perfect pervasiveness" can you go on talking about? Hsueh Tou says that this sort of fellow quite rightly gets his face spattered with spit. I say that this is adding another layer of mud on top of dirt.

# T'ou Tzu's All Sounds

## POINTER

When his great function manifests before you it doesn't keep to patterns and rules. He captures you alive without exerting superfluous effort. But say, who has ever acted this way? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked T'ou Tzu, "All sounds are the sounds of Buddha—right or wrong?"<sup>1</sup> T'ou Tzu said, "Right."<sup>2</sup> The monk said, "Teacher, doesn't your asshole make farting sounds?"<sup>3</sup> T'ou Tzu then hit him.<sup>4</sup>

Again the monk asked, "Coarse words or subtle talk, all returns to the primary meaning—right or wrong?"<sup>5</sup> T'ou Tzu said, "Right."<sup>6</sup> The monk said, "Can I call you an ass, Teacher?"<sup>7</sup> T'ou Tzu then hit him.<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. This monk too knows how to grab the tiger's whiskers. Crashing thunderclaps in a clear sky. He doesn't notice the bad smell of his own shit.
2. He's utterly swindling ordinary people. He's sold his body to you. He's put it over on one side. What's going on in your mind?
3. He just sees that the awl point is sharp; he doesn't see that the chisel edge is square. What is he saying? After all, he suffers defeat.
4. A hit! He should be hit—it won't do to let him go.
5. Grabbing the tiger's whiskers a second time. He's clutching the loot crying out that he's been wronged—why? East, west, south, north—the reflections and echoes are still present.

6. Again he's sold his body to you. A pitfall to trap tigers. What's going on in your mind?
7. He just sees that the awl point is sharp; he doesn't see that the chisel edge is square. Though he has waves that go against the current, yet he has no horns on his head. With a mouth full of blood, he spits out at people.
8. A hit! It won't do to let him go. He should be hit—why does T'ou Tzu stop before his staff is broken?

#### COMMENTARY

T'ou Tzu was plain and truthful; he had the eloquence which stood out from the crowd. Whenever a question was put to him, you saw his guts as soon as he opened his mouth. Without expending superfluous effort, he would immediately cut off the questioner's tongue. It could be said that, setting his plans in motion from within his headquarters tent, he decided victory beyond a thousand miles. This monk had taken his views of sound and form Buddhism and stuck them to his forehead: whenever he met someone, he would immediately ask about it. But T'ou Tzu, an adept, profoundly discerns oncoming winds.

Knowing that T'ou Tzu was truthful, this monk from the start was making a trap for him to go into—hence his subsequent remarks. Nevertheless it was T'ou Tzu who used the tiger trap to fish out the monk's subsequent words. This monk received T'ou Tzu's answer by saying, "Teacher, doesn't your asshole make farting sounds?" As it turned out, as soon as T'ou Tzu set his hook, the monk immediately climbed onto it. Anyone else would have been unable to handle this monk, but T'ou Tzu had the eye and followed up behind and hit him. Such "hound biting a boar" ability is only possible for an adept. Whether he turned to the left or to the right, T'ou Tzu followed him, turning smoothly. When this monk made a trap, wanting to grab the tiger's whiskers, he was far from knowing that T'ou Tzu was above his trap and would hit him. Too bad for this monk—he had a head but no tail. As soon as T'ou Tzu picked up his staff, the monk should have overturned his meditation seat. Then even if T'ou Tzu had used his full capacity, he still would have had to fall back three thousand miles.

The monk also asked, "Coarse words or subtle talk, all returns to the primary meaning—right or wrong?" Again T'ou Tzu said, "Right." This is just like his previous answer; there is no difference. When the monk said, "Can I call you an ass, Teacher?" T'ou Tzu again hit him. Although this monk was making himself a nest, nevertheless he was still exceptional. If the old fellow up on the carved wood seat had been without an eye on his forehead, it would have been impossible for him to crush this monk. But T'ou Tzu did have a place to turn around. When this monk made up a theory, he wanted to plunder T'ou Tzu's shop; but in the end, as before, he couldn't cope with the old fellow.

Haven't you seen Yen T'ou's saying? "In battle each one occupies a pivotal position." T'ou Tzu let go very slowly and gathered in very swiftly. At the time, if this monk had known how to turn himself around and show some life, wouldn't he have been able to act as a man with a mouth like a bowl of blood? A patchrobed monk either doesn't act or (once he begins) doesn't quit. Since this monk was unable to spring back, his nostrils were pierced by T'ou Tzu. The verse says:

#### VERSE

*T'ou Tzu! T'ou Tzu!*

Obviously there's no one on earth like this truthful old fellow. He spoils the sons and daughters of other people's families.

*The wheel of his ability is unobstructed.*

What difficulty is there to handling him? There is a bit indeed.

*He releases one and gets two—*

He snatches your eyes. Where will you see T'ou Tzu?

*The same for that and the same for this.*

Act this way and you'll get a beating; don't act this way and you'll still get a beating. If you take this monk's place, I'll hit you.

*How pitiful: innumerable people playing in the tide,*

The monasteries produce one or a half: they produced this fellow. The world's patchrobed monks act this way.

*In the end fall into the tide and die.*

Too bad! What can they do? They can't get out of the trap.  
A sad person shouldn't talk to sad people.

*If they suddenly came to life,*

My meditation seat shakes—he's startled me. I too fall  
back three thousand miles.

*The hundred rivers would reverse their flow with a rushing  
roaring noise.*

Danger! It is useless to stop and think. I wouldn't dare  
open my mouth. Old man T'ou Tzu, too, must break his  
staff before he's all right.

#### COMMENTARY

"T'ou Tzu! T'ou Tzu!/The wheel of his ability is unobstructed." T'ou Tzu often said, "You always say that T'ou Tzu is truthful, but if you suddenly went three steps down the mountain and someone asked you, 'What is T'ou Tzu's truthfulness?' how would you respond?" The man of old Hsueh Tou said, "Where the wheel of his ability turns the actor is still deluded." The wheel of T'ou Tzu's ability turns so smoothly, entirely without obstructions.

Thus Hsueh Tou says, "He releases one and gets two." Haven't you heard? A monk asked, "What is Buddha?" T'ou Tzu said, "Buddha." Again he asked, "What is the Path?" T'ou Tzu said, "The Path." Again he asked, "What is Ch'an?" T'ou Tzu said, "Ch'an." He also asked, "How is it when the moon is not yet full?" T'ou Tzu said, "Swallowing three or four." Again he asked, "How is it after the moon is full?" T'ou Tzu said, "Spitting out seven or eight." When T'ou Tzu received people he always used this ability.

When he answered this monk (in the main case) he just used the one word "Right." This monk got hit both times. Hence Hsueh Tou says, "The same for that and the same for this." The first four lines have all at once completed Hsueh Tou's praise of T'ou Tzu.

At the end Hsueh Tou versifies the monk saying, "How pitiful: innumerable people playing in the tide." This monk dared to seize T'ou Tzu's banner and drums saying, "Teacher, doesn't your asshole make farting sounds?" and "Can I call you

an ass, Teacher?" This then is where he played in the tide. When this monk had exhausted his clever maneuvers, as before he died amidst T'ou Tzu's words, so T'ou Tzu then hit him. Thus this monk "In the end falls into the tide and dies."

Hsueh Tou releases this monk and says that if he suddenly came to life and overturned the meditation seat, then even T'ou Tzu would have to fall back three thousand miles, and then "The hundred rivers would reverse their flow with a rushing roaring noise." Not only does my meditation seat shake, but the mountains and rivers quake and heaven and earth are abruptly blacked out. If each and every one of you were like this, I'd be beating the drums of retreat. Where will all of you go to secure your bodies and establish your lives?

6. Again he's sold his body to you. A pitfall to trap tigers. What's going on in your mind?
7. He just sees that the awl point is sharp; he doesn't see that the chisel edge is square. Though he has waves that go against the current, yet he has no horns on his head. With a mouth full of blood, he spits out at people.
8. A hit! It won't do to let him go. He should be hit—why does T'ou Tzu stop before his staff is broken?

#### COMMENTARY

T'ou Tzu was plain and truthful; he had the eloquence which stood out from the crowd. Whenever a question was put to him, you saw his guts as soon as he opened his mouth. Without expending superfluous effort, he would immediately cut off the questioner's tongue. It could be said that, setting his plans in motion from within his headquarters tent, he decided victory beyond a thousand miles. This monk had taken his views of sound and form Buddhism and stuck them to his forehead: whenever he met someone, he would immediately ask about it. But T'ou Tzu, an adept, profoundly discerns oncoming winds.

Knowing that T'ou Tzu was truthful, this monk from the start was making a trap for him to go into—hence his subsequent remarks. Nevertheless it was T'ou Tzu who used the tiger trap to fish out the monk's subsequent words. This monk received T'ou Tzu's answer by saying, "Teacher, doesn't your asshole make farting sounds?" As it turned out, as soon as T'ou Tzu set his hook, the monk immediately climbed onto it. Anyone else would have been unable to handle this monk, but T'ou Tzu had the eye and followed up behind and hit him. Such "hound biting a boar" ability is only possible for an adept. Whether he turned to the left or to the right, T'ou Tzu followed him, turning smoothly. When this monk made a trap, wanting to grab the tiger's whiskers, he was far from knowing that T'ou Tzu was above his trap and would hit him. Too bad for this monk—he had a head but no tail. As soon as T'ou Tzu picked up his staff, the monk should have overturned his meditation seat. Then even if T'ou Tzu had used his full capacity, he still would have had to fall back three thousand miles.

The monk also asked, "Coarse words or subtle talk, all returns to the primary meaning—right or wrong?" Again T'ou Tzu said, "Right." This is just like his previous answer; there is no difference. When the monk said, "Can I call you an ass, Teacher?" T'ou Tzu again hit him. Although this monk was making himself a nest, nevertheless he was still exceptional. If the old fellow up on the carved wood seat had been without an eye on his forehead, it would have been impossible for him to crush this monk. But T'ou Tzu did have a place to turn around. When this monk made up a theory, he wanted to plunder T'ou Tzu's shop; but in the end, as before, he couldn't cope with the old fellow.

Haven't you seen Yen T'ou's saying? "In battle each one occupies a pivotal position." T'ou Tzu let go very slowly and gathered in very swiftly. At the time, if this monk had known how to turn himself around and show some life, wouldn't he have been able to act as a man with a mouth like a bowl of blood? A patchrobed monk either doesn't act or (once he begins) doesn't quit. Since this monk was unable to spring back, his nostrils were pierced by T'ou Tzu. The verse says:

#### VERSE

*T'ou Tzu! T'ou Tzu!*

Obviously there's no one on earth like this truthful old fellow. He spoils the sons and daughters of other people's families.

*The wheel of his ability is unobstructed.*

What difficulty is there to handling him? There is a bit indeed.

*He releases one and gets two—*

He snatches your eyes. Where will you see T'ou Tzu?

*The same for that and the same for this.*

Act this way and you'll get a beating; don't act this way and you'll still get a beating. If you take this monk's place, I'll hit you.

*How pitiful: innumerable people playing in the tide,*

The monasteries produce one or a half: they produced this fellow. The world's patchrobed monks act this way.



*In the end fall into the tide and die.*

Too bad! What can they do? They can't get out of the trap.  
A sad person shouldn't talk to sad people.

*If they suddenly came to life,*

My meditation seat shakes—he's startled me. I too fall  
back three thousand miles.

*The hundred rivers would reverse their flow with a rushing  
roaring noise.*

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Hsueh Tou releases this monk and says that if he suddenly came to life and overturned the meditation seat, then even T'ou Tzu would have to fall back three thousand miles, and then "The hundred rivers would reverse their flow with a rushing roaring noise." Not only does my meditation seat shake, but the mountains and rivers quake and heaven and earth are abruptly blacked out. If each and every one of you were like this, I'd be beating the drums of retreat. Where will all of you go to secure your bodies and establish your lives?

# Chao Chou's Newborn Baby

## CASE

A monk asked Chao Chou, "Does a newborn baby also have the sixth consciousness?"<sup>1</sup> Chao Chou said, "(Like) tossing a ball on swift-flowing water."<sup>2</sup>

The monk also asked T'ou Tzu, "What is the meaning of 'Tossing a ball on swift-flowing water?'"<sup>3</sup> T'ou Tzu said, "Moment to moment, nonstop flow."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. With a lightning flash intellect, what newborn baby is he talking about?
2. It's gone by. Even a swift hawk cannot overtake it. You still must check it out.
3. This too is adepts investigating together. Understand? It's gone by.
4. He's a fellow who creates complications.

## COMMENTARY

In the school of the Teachings, this eighth consciousness is set up as the true basis. Mountains, rivers, and the great earth, sun, moon, and stars come into being because of it. It comes as the advance guard and leaves as the rearguard. The Ancients say that "The triple world is only mind—the myriad things are only consciousness." If one experiences the stage of Buddhahood, the eight consciousnesses are transformed into the four wisdoms.<sup>a</sup> In the school of the Teachings they call this "Changing names, not changing essence."

Sense-faculties, sense-objects, and consciousness of sensation are three. Originally we are unable to discriminate among the sense-objects before us. But the subtle inner faculties can produce consciousness, and consciousness can reveal dis-

crimination of forms. This is the sixth consciousness—conceptual thinking. The seventh consciousness is Manas. It can go take hold of the imaginary things of the world and cause a person to be vexed and troubled so that he doesn't attain freedom and independence. As for the eighth consciousness, it's called the Alayavijnana and it's also called the Storehouse Consciousness. It contains all the seeds of good and evil.

This monk knew the ideas of the verbal teachings, so he used them to question Chao Chou by saying, "Does a newborn baby also have the sixth consciousness or not?" Although a newborn baby is equipped with the six consciousnesses, though his eyes can see and his ears can hear, he doesn't yet discriminate among the six sense-objects. At this time he knows nothing of good and evil, long and short, right and wrong, or gain and loss. A person who studies the Path must become again like an infant. Then praise and blame, success and fame, unfavorable circumstances and favorable environments—none of these can move him. "Though his eyes see form, he is the same as a blind man; though his ears hear sound, he is the same as a deaf man." He is like a fool, like an idiot—his mind is motionless as Mt. Sumeru. This is the place where patchrobed monks really and truly acquire power.

An Ancient said, "My patched garment covering my head, myriad concerns cease: at this time I don't understand anything at all." Only if you can be like this will you have a small share of attainment. Though an adept is like this, nevertheless he can't be fooled at all—as before, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. He is without artifice and without clinging thoughts. He is like the sun and moon moving through the sky without ever stopping and without saying, "I have so many names and forms." He is like the sky everywhere covering, like the earth everywhere supporting: since they have no mind, they bring up and nurture myriad beings without saying, "I have so many accomplishments." Since sky and earth are mindless, they last forever—what has mind has limits. A person who has attained the Path is like this too. In the midst of no activity, he carries out his activities, accepting all unfavorable and favorable circumstances with a compassionate heart.

When they got to this point the Ancients still upbraided themselves and said, "When you've completely perfectly comprehended, there's nothing to comprehend; in the dark,

abstruse, hidden place, you still must be rebuked." They also said, "All things are thoroughly comprehended and all beings are clearly understood—when one who has Arrived senses this, he's startled in the darkness." Again it was said, "Without making a sound he goes beyond the ordinary and enters sagehood. The reclining dragon deeply fears the blue pool's clarity." If human beings can be like this always, how can a single name remain in the world? Though it's this way, they must go on to leap out of their nest before they attain.

Haven't you seen where it says in the (Hua Yen) sutra,<sup>b</sup> "A bodhisattva of the eighth stage, Immovability, turns the great Dharma Wheel in an atom of dust, using the wisdom of non-activity. At all times, whether walking, standing, sitting, or lying down, he doesn't cling to gain and loss, but lets himself move and flow into the sea of All-Knowledge." When patched-robed monks get here they still must not become attached: they follow the occasion freely. When they have tea, they drink tea; when they have food, they eat food. Neither the words "concentration" nor "not concentration" can be applied to this transcendental matter.

Master Shan Tao of the Stone Grotto taught his congregation saying, "Haven't you seen a little one when it's just emerged from the womb? Has a baby ever said, 'I know how to read the scriptures'? At that time it does not know the meaning of having the Buddha nature or not having the Buddha nature. As he grows up he learns all sorts of knowledge; then he comes forth saying 'I am able' and 'I understand,' without knowing that this is troubling over illusory dusts. Among the sixteen contemplation practices, the baby's practice is the best. When he's babbling he symbolizes the person studying the Path, with his detachment from the discriminating mind that grasps and rejects. That's why I'm praising infants. I can make a comparison by taking the case of a baby, but if I say that the baby is the Path, people of these times would misunderstand."

Nan Ch'uan said, "After eighteen, I was able to make a living." Chao Chou said, "After eighteen, I was able to break up the family and scatter the household." He also said, "I was in the South for twenty years: only the two mealtimes of gruel and rice were points of mixed application of mind."

Ts'ao Shan asked a monk, "'In his concentration the bodhisattva smells the fragrant elephant crossing the river very

clearly.' What scripture does this come from?" The monk said, "From the *Nirvana* scripture." Shan said, "Does he smell it before or after his concentration?" The monk said "You've flowed, Teacher." Shan said, "Receive it on the river bank."

Again: the *Surangama* scripture says, "The fullness (of the six consciousnesses) enters to merge in the fullness (of the Storehouse Consciousness), going into the realm of consciousness."

Again: the *Lankavatara* scripture says, "Birth of signs—being obstructed by grasping. Birth of conception—false thinking. Birth of flow—pursuing falsehood, revolving and flowing. You must get out of the third aspect, 'birth of flow'; only then will you be joyfully alive and independent."<sup>c</sup>

Thus Kuei Shan asked Yang Shan, "How is it with you Disciple Chi?" Yang Shan said, "Are you asking about his perceptive understanding or his active understanding? If you ask about his active understanding, I don't know. If you ask about his perceptive understanding, it's like a pitcher of water being poured into a pitcher of water." If you can be like this you can be the teacher of a region.

When Chao Chou said, "Tossing a ball on swift-flowing water," he was already turning smoothly. When you toss it onto swift-flowing water, in a blink of an eye it's gone. As the *Surangama* scripture says, "Looked upon from afar, swift-flowing water is tranquil and still." An Ancient said, "In a fast-flowing river the currents of water never stop and they are unaware of each other—all things are like this too." The meaning of Chao Chou's answer is completely similar to these (quotations).

The monk also asked T'ou Tzu, "What is the meaning of 'Tossing a ball on swift-flowing water'?" T'ou Tzu said, "Moment to moment, nonstop flow," spontaneously matching the monk's question perfectly. The practice of these Ancients, Chao Chou and T'ou Tzu, was so thoroughgoing that they answered as one. They no longer make use of calculations—as soon as you question them they already know where you come down.

Although a baby's sixth consciousness is inactive, nevertheless from moment to moment it doesn't stop, but flows on like a hidden river. Of T'ou Tzu's answering this way we can say that he profoundly discerns oncoming winds.

Hsueh Tou's verse says:

VERSE

*Sixth consciousness inactive—he puts forth a question.*

Though he has eyes, he is like a blind man; though he has ears, he is like a deaf man. The bright mirror is in its stand; the bright pearl is in the palm of his hand. In one line Hsueh Tou has said it all.

*The adepts have both discerned where he's coming from—*

What's the need? Still, one must distinguish initiated from naive. Just experience it, then you'll know.

*On the boundless swift-flowing water, tossing a ball:*

Consistent from beginning to end. It's gone. What is he saying?

*Where it comes down, it doesn't stay—who can watch it!*

Watch it and you'll go blind. It's gone. "Receive it on the river bank."

COMMENTARY

"Sixth consciousness inactive—he puts forth a question." When the Ancients studied the Path they brought themselves to this point: this is called "achievement of non-activity." They were the same as a newborn baby: though possessed of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, they didn't discriminate among the six sense-objects. In sum, they were non-active. When you get to this realm, then you can overcome dragons and subdue tigers, die sitting or die standing up. Right now people should just take the myriad phenomena before their eyes and put them to rest at once. What need is there to get above the eighth stage (of a bodhisattva) before you can be like this? Although there's no activity, as of old mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers.

In a previous verse (about Chao Chou and T'ou Tzu, in Case 41) Hsueh Tou said, "In living there's an eye—still, it's the same as death/Why use anti-serum to test an adept?" Since Chao Chou and T'ou Tzu were adepts he says, "The adepts

have both discerned where he's coming from—/On the boundless swift-flowing water, tossing a ball." T'ou Tzu said, "Moment to moment, nonstop flow." Do all of you people know what this really means? At the end Hsueh Tou has people set eyes on it for themselves and watch. Hence he says, "Where it comes down, it doesn't stay—who can watch it?" This is Hsueh Tou's living line. But say, what does it really mean?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The eight consciousnesses are transformed into four knowledges as follows: The first five consciousnesses (associated with seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching) are transmuted into the Knowledge of Accomplishment. The sixth consciousness becomes the Wondrous Observing Knowledge, the seventh becomes the Knowledge of Equality, and the eighth becomes the Great Perfect Mirror Knowledge.
- b. The ten stages of a bodhisattva's career, as described in the Hua Yen (*Avatamsaka*) scripture, are called: 1) Joy; 2) Freedom from Defilement; 3) Emanating Light; 4) Radiant Wisdom; 5) Impossible to Surpass; 6) (True Thusness) Becoming Manifest; 7) Far-reaching; 8) Immovability; 9) Good Wisdom; 10) Clouds of Dharma.
- c. Kuei Shan said to Yang Shan, "I consider the Mirror Knowledge to be the source of the school. It produces three kinds of birth: birth of conception, birth of signs, birth of flowings. The *Surangama* scripture says, 'Concepts and signs constitute the dusts; conscious feelings constitute defilement. Detach from both and your Dharma Eye will be clear and pure at all times: how could you fail then to realize unexcelled correct awakening?' The birth of conception is fragmentation and confusion of the mind which thinks; the birth of signs is the manifestation of the object thought of. Together with the subtle flowings, they constitute the dusts and defilements. If you can clear them completely, only then will you be free." (*Jen T'ien Yen Mu*, 3)



# Yao Shan's Shooting the Elk of Elks

## POINTER

He captures the banner and seizes the drums—the thousand sages cannot search him out. He cuts off confusing obscurities—ten thousand devices cannot get to him. This is not the wondrous functioning of spiritual powers, nor is it the suchness of the basic essence. But tell me, what does he rely on to attain such marvels?

## CASE

A monk asked Yao Shan, "On a level field, in the shallow grass, the elk and deer form a herd: how can one shoot the elk of elks?"<sup>1</sup> Shan said, "Look—an arrow!"<sup>2</sup> The monk let himself fall down.<sup>3</sup> Shan said, "Attendant, drag this dead fellow out."<sup>4</sup> The monk then ran out.<sup>5</sup> Shan said, "This fellow playing with a mud ball—what end will there be to it?"<sup>6</sup>

Hsueh Tou commented saying, "Though he lived for three steps, after five steps he had to die."<sup>7</sup>

## NOTES

1. He enters enemy headquarters with his helmet off. He raises his head wearing horns. He pulls an arrow out of the back of his head.<sup>a</sup>
2. He goes right up and takes him. If you're not running downhill fast, it's hard to meet him. A hit!
3. Obviously this monk is unusual, but once dead he doesn't come to life again. He's a fellow giving play to his spirit.
4. He acts according to the imperative. He doesn't bother to test the monk again. The first arrow was still light; the second arrow was deep.

5. Inside the coffin, he opens up his eyes—within death he finds life. He still has some breath left.
6. Too bad Yao Shan let him go. He acts according to the imperative, but he's adding frost on top of snow.
7. One hand lifts up, one hand presses down. Even if he ran a hundred steps he would still have to lose his body and his life.

### COMMENTARY

In the Ts'ao Tung tradition this case is called "a question that uses things." It's also called "a question testing the host," used in order to illustrate his present state of mind.

Ordinarily deer and elk are easy to shoot. Only the elk of elks, that is, the king among deer, is very difficult to shoot. This (king) elk always sharpens his horns on the rocks of the cliffs (where it lives,) so that they become sharp as sword blades. He defends the herd of deer with his own body so that even tigers cannot come near.

Likewise, this monk seems intelligent and alert as he draws on this to question Yao Shan to reveal what he would do first. Shan said, "Look—an arrow!" An expert Teaching Master, he is undeniably marvellous, like sparks struck from stone, like a flash of lightning.

Haven't you heard (about what happened) when San P'ing first called on Shih Kung? As soon as Kung saw him coming, he immediately went through the motion of bending a bow and said, "Look—an arrow!" San P'ing opened his breast (to the "arrow") and said, "This is the arrow that kills the man—what is the arrow that brings the man life?" Kung plucked the bow-string three times, whereupon San P'ing bowed in homage. Kung said, "After thirty years with a single bow and two arrows, today I've finally managed to shoot half a sage." Then he broke his bow and arrows.

Later San P'ing took this up with Ta Tien. Tien said, "Since it is the arrow that brings people life, why draw it on a bow-string?" an P'ing was speechless. Tien said, "Thirty years hence it will still be hard to find someone to raise these words."

Fa Teng had a verse saying:

*In the old days we had Master Shih Kung—  
Setting his bow and arrows, he sat.  
He went on like this for thirty years—  
Not a single one understood (until)  
San P'ing came and hit the target,  
And father and son reached harmony.  
Thinking back carefully, (I see that)  
From the beginning, they were shooting the mound  
(instead of the target on it.)*

Shih Kung's strategy was the same as Yao Shan's. San P'ing had an eye on his forehead, so he hit the target immediately given a single phrase. It was just like Yao Shan saying, "Look—an arrow!" and this monk then letting himself fall down, playing the elk. This monk seemed to be an adept too, but it's just that he had a head but no tail. Once he had set his trap, he wanted to make Yao Shan fall in. But what could he do? Yao Shan was an adept and kept on pressing relentlessly. When Shan said, "Attendant, drag this dead fellow out," it was as if he was extending his battle lines forward. This monk then ran out: he may have been right, but nonetheless he wasn't free and clean, his hands and feet were stuck. That's why Yao Shan said, "This fellow playing with a mud ball—what end will there be to it?" If Yao Shan hadn't had the final word at that time, he would have been criticized by others down through the ages.

Shan said, "Look—an arrow!" whereupon this monk fell down. Tell me, was this understanding or not? If you say it was understanding, why then did Yao Shan speak of him this way, as a fellow playing with a mud ball? This was extremely evil, just like (the following):

A monk asked Te Shan, "How is it when a student holding a sharp sword tries to take the Master's head?" Te Shan extended his neck forward toward him and shouted. The monk said, "The Master's head has fallen." Te Shan lowered his head and returned to his abbot's quarters. Again: Yen T'ou asked a monk, "Where have you come from?" The monk said, "From the Western Capital." Yen T'ou said, "After Huang Ch'ao passed by, did you take his sword?" The monk said, "I did." Yen T'ou extended his neck forward toward him and shouted. The monk said, "The Master's head has fallen." Yen T'ou

laughed loudly. Cases of this kind are all traps to fell tigers, just like the present main case. Fortunately Yao Shan wasn't taken in by this monk—since he saw through him, he just kept on pressing.

Hsueh Tou says, "Although this monk lived for three steps, after five steps he had to die." Although this monk knew very well how to look at the arrow, he immediately let himself fall down—when Yao Shan said, "Attendant, drag this dead fellow out," he immediately ran out. Hsueh Tou says, "I'm afraid he won't live beyond three steps." If the monk had leaped beyond five steps at that time, no one in the world would have been able to handle him.

In a meeting of adepts, from beginning to end there must be an uninterrupted interchange of guest and host; only then is there a share of freedom and independence. Since at that time the monk wasn't able to continue from beginning to end, consequently he meets with Hsueh Tou's censure. But at the end Hsueh Tou himself uses his words for his verse saying:

#### VERSE

*The elk of elks—*

Set your eyes high and look! He raises his head wearing horns.

*You should take a look.*

What sort of thing is it? He's running in the secondary level. If you want to shoot, then shoot, but why look?

*(Yao Shan) releases one arrow—*

On target. You must realize that Yao Shan is an expert.

*(The monk) runs three steps.*

He's leaping with life, but only for three steps. He's been dead a long time.

*If he had lived for five steps,*

What for? He leaps a hundred steps. How is it when unexpectedly finding life in the midst of death?

*He would have formed a herd and chased the tiger.*

The two reflect each other. You should fall back three thousand miles. The world's patchrobed monks let the tiger get away.

*The correct eye has always been given to a hunter.*

What can you do? Yao Shan doesn't consent to acknowledge these words. It's so for Yao Shan—what about Hsueh Tou? It doesn't concern Yao Shan, it doesn't concern Hsueh Tou, it doesn't concern me, and it doesn't concern you.

*In a loud voice Hsueh Tou said, "Look—an arrow!"*

One punishment for all their crimes. You must fall back three thousand miles from them before you're all right. I hit, saying, "He's already blocked off your throats."

#### COMMENTARY

"The elk of elks—you should take a look." Patchrobed monks must have the eye of the elk of elks and the horns of the elk of elks, they must have devices and strategy. Even if it's a fierce tiger with wings or a great cat with horns, the elk of elks can still preserve his body and keep harm at a distance. At that time when this monk let himself fall, he was saying of himself, "I am the elk of elks."

"Yao Shan releases one arrow—the monk runs three steps." When Yao Shan said, "Look—an arrow!" the monk then fell down. When Yao Shan said, "Attendant, drag this dead fellow out," the monk then ran out. He did very well, but nevertheless he was only able to run three steps.

"If he had lived for five steps, / He would have formed a herd and chased the tiger." Hsueh Tou said, "I'm afraid that after five steps he had to die. If he had been able to leap beyond five steps at that time, then he would have been able to gather his herd and gone to chase the tiger." The horns of the elk of elks are sharp as spears—when a tiger sees him, even he becomes afraid and flees. This elk is the king among the deer: he always leads the herd in driving the tiger to another mountain.

Finally Hsueh Tou praises Yao Shan for having a way to assert himself in that situation. "The correct eye had always been given to a hunter." Yao Shan is like a hunter who knows how to shoot and this monk is like (his quarry) the elk. Then, having gone up to the hall and related this story, Hsueh Tou wrapped it up into a single bundle, speaking a single line in a loud voice: "Look—an arrow!" At once those who had been sitting and standing (listening to him) were unable to stir.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "He pulls an arrow out of the back of his head": the arrow pierces his head from the front; he pulls it all the way through and out the back.

# Ta Lung's Hard and Fast Body of Reality

## POINTER

Only those with eyes can know the fishing line. Only adepts can handle devices outside of patterns. But say, what is the fishing line? What are devices beyond patterns? To test I'm citing this old case: look!

## CASE

A monk asked Ta Lung, "The physical body rots away: what is the hard and fast body of reality?"<sup>1</sup>

Lung said, "The mountain flowers bloom like brocade, the valley streams are brimming blue as indigo."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. His statement makes them into two. Still, it's all right to separate them.
2. A flute with no holes hitting against a felt-pounding board. The whole cannot be broken apart. When someone comes from one end of the province, I go to the other end.

## COMMENTARY

If you go to the words to search for this thing, it's like trying to hit the moon by waving a stick—you won't make any connection. An Ancient clearly stated, "If you want to attain Intimacy, don't ask with questions. Why? Because the question is in the answer and the answer is in the question."

This monk picked up a load of crudeness and exchanged it for a load of confusion: in posing this question, his defeat was not slight. How could anyone other than Ta Lung manage to cover heaven and cover earth? The monk asking this way and Ta Lung answering this way is a single whole. Ta Lung didn't move a hair's breadth: it was like seeing a rabbit and releasing a falcon, like seeing a hole and putting in a plug. Is this time and season in the twelve-part canon of the Triple Vehicle? Undeniably his answer was extraordinary, it's just that his words have no flavor and he blocks up people's mouths. Thus it is said, "When white clouds lie across the valley mouth, many birds returning by night can't find their nests."

Some say that this was just answering glibly. Those who understand in this fashion are nothing but exterminators of the Buddha's race. They are far from knowing that with one device and one objective, the Ancients broke fetters and smashed chains, that every word and phrase were pure gold and raw gems.

If one has the eye and brain of a patchrobed monk, sometimes he holds fast and sometimes he lets go. Shining and functioning at the same time, with both persons and objects taken away, both sides let go and both sides gather in. Facing the situation, he changes accordingly. Without the great function and great capacity, how would he be able to enclose heaven and earth like this? Much as a bright mirror on its stand: when a foreigner comes, a foreigner appears, and when a native comes, a native appears.

This case is the same as the story (case 39) of the Flower Hedge, though the meaning is not the same. Here the monk's question was ignorant, so Ta Lung's answer was exactly appropriate. Haven't you heard (this story, case 27)? A monk asked Yun Men, "How is it when the tree withers and the leaves fall?" Men said, "The body exposed in the golden wind." This is called "arrowpoints meeting." Here the monk asked Ta Lung, "The physical body rots away: what is the hard and fast body of reality?" Ta Lung said, "The mountain flowers bloom like brocade, the valley streams are brimming blue as indigo." This is just like "you go west to Ch'in, I go east to Lu": since he acts this way, I don't act this way. Matching Ta Lung's answer with Yun Men's, they're opposites. It's easy to see Yun Men



acting thus, but it's hard to see Ta Lung acting otherwise. Nevertheless, Ta Lung's tongue is very subtle.

VERSE

*Asking without knowing.*

East and west not distinguished. Playing with the thing without knowing its name. He buys the hat to fit the head.

*Answering, still not understanding.*

South and north not differentiated. He switched the monk's skull around. South of the river, north of the river.

*The moon is cold, the wind is high—*

What is it like? Today is precisely this time and season. The world's people have eyes but have never seen, have ears but have never heard.

*On the ancient cliff, frigid juniper.*

Even better when it's not raining. A flute with no holes hitting against a felt-pounding board.

*How delightful: on the road he met a man who had attained the Path,*

You too must get here personally before you're all right. Give me back my staff. They come like this, forming a crowd.

*And didn't use speech or silence to reply.*

Where will you see Ta Lung? What would you use to answer him properly?

*His hand grasps the white jade whip.*

It should be broken to pieces.

*And smashes the black dragon's pearl.<sup>a</sup>*

It remains for future people to look at. Too bad!

*If he hadn't smashed it,*

Letting his move go. Again you go on like this.

*He would have increased its flaws.*

What is he doing, playing with a mud ball? He seems more and more decrepit. His crimes fill the sky.

*The nation has a code of laws—*

Those who know the law fear it. "In the morning three thousand blows, at night eight hundred blows."

*Three thousand articles of offenses.*

He's only told the half of it. There are eighty-four thousand. Countless eons of uninterrupted hell wouldn't make up for half of it.

#### COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou versifies here with much skill. Before when he was versifying Yun Men's words ("body exposed in the golden wind") he said, "Since the question has the source/The answer too is in the same place." Since it's not so with this case, Hsueh Tou instead says, "Asking without knowing/ Answering, still not understanding." Ta Lung's answer was a glimpse from the side that was simply amazing. His answer was so clear that whoever questioned him this way had already incurred defeat even before he asked. With his answer he was able to bend down to the monk and match him perfectly: adapting to his capacity he rightly said, "The mountain flowers bloom like brocade, the valley streams are brimming blue as indigo." How will all of you understand Ta Lung's meaning right now? As a glimpse from the side, his answer was truly extraordinary.

Thus Hsueh Tou comes out with his verse to make people realize that the moon is cold, the wind is high and still beats against the frigid juniper on the ancient cliff. But say, how will you understand Hsueh Tou's meaning? Thus I just said that it's a flute with no holes hitting against a felt-pounding board.

The verse is completed with just these first four lines, but Hsueh Tou was still fearful that people would make up rationalizations, so he said, "How delightful: on the road he met a man who had attained the Path,/And didn't use speech or silence to reply." This matter, then, is not seeing, hearing, discernment, or knowledge; nor is it the discriminations of calculating thought. Therefore it was said:

*Direct and truthful, without bringing anything else  
along,*

*Moving on alone—what is there to depend on?  
On the road, if you meet anyone who has attained  
the Path,  
Don't use speech or silence to reply.*

This is a verse of Hsiang Yen's that Hsueh Tou has drawn on. Haven't you heard? A monk asked Chao Chou, "Without using speech or silence to answer, I wonder with what should one answer?" Chou said, "Show your lacquer vessel." These (sayings of Hsiang Yen and Chao Chou) are the same as Ta Lung's statement (in the main case): they don't fall within the scope of your feelings or conceptual thoughts.

What is this like? "His hand grasps the white jade whip/And smashes the black dragon's pearl." Thus the command of the patriarchs must be carried out, cutting off everything in the ten directions. This is the matter on the sword's edge, for which one must have this kind of strategy. Otherwise you turn your back on all the sages since antiquity. When you get here you must be without the slightest concern, then naturally you'll have the advantage. This, then, is how a transcendent man comports himself. "If he hadn't smashed it," necessarily "He would have increased its flaws," and thus he would have seemed broken down and decrepit.

But in the end, how can you be right? "The nation has a code of laws—/Three thousand articles of offenses." There are three thousand subdivisions of the five punishments, and none is greater than (the punishment) for not being respectful. This monk offended against all three thousand articles at once. How so? Because he didn't deal with people on the basis of his own thing. As for Ta Lung, he of course was not this way.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This precious jewel of legend is to be found in the ocean depths, right under the jaws of the black dragon.

# Yun Men's Ancient Buddhas and the Pillar

## CASE

Yun Men, teaching the community, said, "The ancient Buddhas and the pillar merge—what level of mental activity is this?"<sup>1</sup> He himself said on their behalf,<sup>2</sup> "On South Mountain clouds gather,<sup>3</sup> on North Mountain rain falls."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. Three thousand miles away. There's no connection. Cracked open.
2. When someone in the eastern house dies, someone from the western house assists in the mourning. The single compounded form cannot be grasped.
3. Throughout heaven and earth, they can't be seen. A knife cannot cut through.
4. Not a drop falls. Half south of the river, half north of the river.

## COMMENTARY

Great Master Yun Men produced more than eighty men of knowledge. Seventeen years after he passed on, when they opened his tomb and beheld him, (his body was not decomposed, but) upright and sound as formerly. The field of his vision had been bright and clear, his mentality and perspective swift. All his instructions, alternative remarks, and words spoken on behalf of others were direct, solitary, and steep. This present case is like sparks struck from stone, like flashing lightning; in fact, it's "a spirit appearing and a demon disappearing."<sup>a</sup> Librarian Ch'ing said, "Is there such talk in the whole great treasury of the Teachings?"

People these days make their living on emotional interpretations and say "Buddha is the guide for the three realms, the compassionate father of the four orders of living beings. Why then do the ancient Buddhas merge with the pillar?" If you understand this way, you'll never be able to find it. Some call (Yun Men's saying) "calling out from within nothingness." They are far from knowing that the talk of the teaching masters of our school cuts off conceptual consciousness, cuts off emotional evaluation, cuts off birth and death, and cuts off the defilement of doctrine, enters the correct state<sup>b</sup> without retaining anything at all. As soon as you rationalize and calculate, you tie your hands and feet.

But tell me, what was old Yun Men's meaning? Just make mind and objects a single thusness; then good and bad, right and wrong, won't be able to shake you. Then it will be all right whether you say "there is" or "there isn't"; then it will be all right whether you have mental activity or you don't. When you get here, each and every clap of the hands is the true imperative. My late teacher Wu Tsu said, "Yun Men, supposedly so great, really didn't have much guts." If it were me, I just would have told him, "The eighth level of mental activity."

He said, "The ancient Buddhas and the pillar merge—what level of mental activity is this?" In that moment he wrapped it all up in front of you. When a monk asked him what this meant, Yun Men said, "one belt worth thirty cents." He has the eye to judge heaven and earth.

Since no one understood, afterwards he himself spoke on their behalf: "On South Mountain clouds gather, on North Mountain rain falls." Thus he opened up a route of entry for future students. That's why Hsueh Tou picks out the place where he settles heaven and earth to make people see. But as soon as you blunder into calculation, you stumble past and miss it, though it's right in front of you. You simply must go to the source of Yun Men's fundamental meaning to clearly understand his lofty mind. Thus the verse says,

#### VERSE

*South Mountain clouds,*

Throughout heaven and earth, they can't be seen. A knife  
cannot cut in.

*North Mountain rain—*

Not a drop falls. Half south of the river, half north of the river.

*The Twenty-Eight and Six see it before them.*

Wherever I look, I can't see. Hsueh Tou is dragging in other people. The lantern is hanging from the pillar.

*In Korea they've gone up into the hall,*

Surging up in the east, sinking down in the west. The east guild doesn't see the profits of the west guild. Where does he get this news?

*In China they haven't yet beaten the drum.*

Fifteen minutes late. Give me back the story. At first he doesn't get there, afterwards he goes too far.

*In suffering, happiness—*

Who would you have know this?

*In happiness, suffering—*

A double case. Who would you have bring this up? Suffering is suffering, happiness is happiness. Where are there two heads, three faces?

*Who says gold is like shit?*

Those with eyes will discern this. Try to brush it off and look. Uh-oh! What a pity! But say, is it the ancient Buddhas or the pillar?

#### COMMENTARY

"South Mountain clouds, / North Mountain rain." Hsueh Tou buys the hat to fit the head, watches the wind to set his sails. On the edge of a sword, he puts down footnotes for you. As for "The Twenty-eight (Indian Ch'an Patriarchs) and Six (Chinese Ch'an Patriarchs) see it before them," don't misunderstand! This simply versifies "The ancient Buddhas and the pillar merge—what level of mental activity is this?"

Afterwards, Hsueh Tou opens up a road and creates complications to make you see Yun Men's meaning. "In Korea they've gone up into the hall, / In China they haven't yet beaten the drum." Hsueh Tou goes where the thunder rolls and comets fly and says, "In suffering, happiness— / In happiness, suffering."

Hsueh Tou seems to have piled up gems and jewels and put them here.

Finally there's this little line, "Who says gold is like shit?" This line is from Ch'an Yueh's poem "Travelling the Road is Hard," which Hsueh Tou draws on here to use. Ch'an Yueh wrote,

*People cannot fathom the ocean's depth or the  
mountains' height—*

*Past and present, more and more green and blue.*

*Don't associate with the shallow and superficial—*

*Where the ground is low it can only produce bram-  
bles.*

*Who says gold is like shit?*

*No more news of Chang Er and Ch'en Yu.<sup>c</sup>*

*Travelling the road is hard;*

*The hardships of travel, see for yourself!*

And isn't the territory broad and the people few? You cloud-dwelling saints!

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This term is used to describe the maneuvers of a skilled battle commander, who can direct his forces in unexpected movements that are baffling and unpredictable to the enemy.
- b. In early Buddhism, the "correct state" means *nirvana*, the extinction of egoism and suffering. In the Ts'ao-Tung Ch'an tradition, the "correct state" was used to refer to emptiness as opposed (propositionally in dialectic and subjectively in meditation) to the "biased state," or the realm of myriad forms. The patriarchs of the Ts'ao-Tung school used a five step dialectic to show that the correct and biased simultaneously contain each other, and that each (defined as separate under the aforementioned conditions) has both a correct and biased, or absolute and relative, aspect. Of the correct, or absolute, Ts'ao Shan said, "This correct state does not come from illumination; it is so whether or not the Buddhas appear in the world. Thus all the thousand sages, the myriad sages, return to the correct state to attain realization" (from Wu I Hsien Chueh, "Revealing the Secret of the Five Ranks").

- c. Chang Er and Ch'en Yu are the proverbial close friends who fell out and turned against each other. During the period of the fall of the Ch'in dynasty (end of the third century B.C.) Ch'en Yu's father had occupied territory with his army and begun to revive an independent state of Chao. (China had been unified for the first time under the Ch'in dynasty, which had conquered the six other major states, one of which was Chao.) Chang Er was an important minister in Chao under the Ch'ens. Later the friendship between Chang Er and Ch'en Yu turned to hatred, and Chang Er cooperated with the forces of one of the generals of the founder of the Han dynasty (which eventually succeeded Ch'in), which destroyed independent Chao and killed Ch'en Yu.



# Vimalakirti's Gate of Nonduality

## POINTER

Though you say "It is," there is nothing which "is" can affirm. Though you say "It is not," there is nothing that "is not" can negate. When "is" and "is not" are left behind, and gain and loss are forgotten, then you are clean and naked, free and at ease.

But tell me, what is in front of you and in back of you? If there is a patchrobed monk who comes forward and says, "In front is the Buddha shrine and the main gate, behind is the abbot's sleeping room and private quarters," tell me, does this man have eyes or not? If you can judge this man, I'll allow that you have personally seen the Ancients.

## CASE

Vimalakirti asked Manjusri,<sup>1</sup> "What is a bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?"<sup>2</sup>

Manjusri said, "According to what I think,<sup>3</sup> in all things,<sup>4</sup> no words, no speech,<sup>5</sup> no demonstration and no recognition,<sup>6</sup> to leave behind all questions and answers;<sup>7</sup> this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality."<sup>8</sup>

Then Manjusri asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you should tell us, good man, what is a bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?"<sup>9</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?"<sup>10</sup> He also said, "Completely exposed."<sup>11</sup>

## NOTES

1. This fellow is making quite a fuss. He should shut his mouth.
2. He knows, yet he deliberately transgresses.
3. What will he say? It simply can't be explained. He's wearing

stocks, carrying evidence of his crime, hauling himself into the magistrate's office.

4. What is he calling "all things"?
5. What is he saying?
6. He can fool others . . .
7. What is he saying?
8. What's the use of entering? What's the use of so many complications?
9. Not even the Buddhas of the past, present, and future, let alone the Golden Grain Tathagata (Vimalakirti), can open their mouths about this one support. Manjusri has turned the spear around and stabbed one man to death. The arrow hits Vimalakirti just as he was shooting at the others.
10. Bah! Hsueh Tou gathers ten thousand arrows to his breast and speaks the truth in Vimalakirti's place.
11. Not only that time, but now too, it is so. Hsueh Tou is drawing his bow after the thief has gone. Although he uses all his strength to help the congregation, what can he do—calamity comes forth from his own door. But tell me, can Hsueh Tou see where this comes down? Since he hasn't seen it even in a dream, how can he say "completely exposed"? Danger! Even the golden-haired lion is unable to search it out.

### COMMENTARY

Vimalakirti had the various great bodhisattvas each speak on the Dharma gate of nonduality. At the time, the thirty-two bodhisattvas all took dualistic views of doing and nondoing, of the two truths, real and conventional, and merged them into a monistic view which they considered to be the Dharma gate of nonduality.

Finally he asked Manjusri. Manjusri said, "According to what I think, in all things, no words and no speech, no demonstration and no recognition, to leave behind all questions and answers; this is entering the Dharma gate of nonduality." Since the other thirty-two had used words to dispense with words, Manjusri used no-words to dispense with words. At once he swept everything away, not wanting anything, and

considered this to be the Dharma gate of nonduality. He certainly didn't realize that this was the sacred tortoise dragging its tail, that in wiping away the tracks he was making traces. It's just like a broom sweeping away dust; though the dust is removed, the tracks of the broom still remain.

Since in the end, as before, some traces were left, Manjusri then asked Vimalakirti, "We have each already spoken. Now you tell us, good man, what is a bodhisattva's entry into the Dharma gate of nonduality?" Vimalakirti was silent. If you're alive, you'll never go sink into the dead water. If you make up such (dead) views, you're like a mad dog chasing a clod of earth.<sup>a</sup>

Hsueh Tou didn't say that Vimalakirti kept silent, nor did he say that he sat silently on his seat. Hsueh Tou just went to the critical point and said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" Just when Hsueh Tou spoke this way, did he see Vimalakirti? He hadn't seen him even in a dream.

Vimalakirti was an ancient Buddha of the past, who also had a family and household. He helped the Buddha Shakyamuni teach and transform. He had inconceivable intelligence, inconceivable perspective, inconceivable supernatural powers and the wondrous use of them. Inside his own room he accommodated thirty-two thousand jeweled lion thrones and a great multitude of eighty thousand, without it being too spacious or too crowded. But tell me, what principle is this? Can it be called the wondrous function of supernatural powers? Don't misunderstand; if it is the Dharma gate of nonduality, only by attaining together and witnessing together can there be common mutual realization and knowledge.

Only Manjusri was able to give a reply. Even so, was he able to avoid Hsueh Tou's censure? Hsueh Tou, talking as he did, also had to meet with these two men (Vimalakirti and Manjusri). Hsueh Tou said, "What did Vimalakirti say?" and "Completely exposed." You tell me, where was the exposure? This little bit has nothing to do with gain or loss, nor does it fall into right and wrong. It's like being up on a ten thousand fathom cliff; if you can give up your life and leap off, you may see Vimalakirti in person. If you cannot give it up, you're like a ram caught in a fence. Hsueh Tou was a man who had abandoned his life, so he produces it in verse, saying,

## VERSE

*Bah! to old Vimalakirti—*

Why revile him? In the morning, three thousand blows, in the evening, eight hundred blows. Reviling him doesn't accomplish anything. He deserves thirty blows.

*Out of compassion for living beings, he suffers an empty affliction,*

Why have compassion for them? They themselves have the Diamond King's jewel sword. For this idle affair Vimalakirti increased their ignorance. He took the trouble but accomplished nothing.

*Lying ill in Vaisali,*

On whose account does he do this? It involves everyone.

*His whole body withered and emaciated.<sup>b</sup>*

Leaving aside his illness for a moment, why was his mouth bent into a frown? He can't eat food or draw a breath.

*Manjusri, the teacher of seven Buddhas, comes*

When a guest comes, one must attend to him. When a thief comes, one must beat him. Manjusri brings along a crowd. It takes an adept for this.

*To the single room that's been swept repeatedly;*

It still exists. From the beginning Vimalakirti has been making his living inside a ghost cave.

*He asks about the gate of nonduality.*

If there were anything that could be said, it would have been said by him. I hit, saying, "You too have searched without finding it."

*Then Vimalakirti leans and falls.*

Heavens! Heavens! What are you saying?

*He doesn't lean and fall—*

He finds life in the midst of death; there's still some breath in him.

*The golden-haired lion has no place to look.*

Bah! Do you see?

## COMMENTARY

Hsueh Tou says "Bah! to old Vimalakirti!" Why does he start off at the very beginning reviling him? Right at the start Hsueh Tou takes the Diamond King's jewel sword and cuts him right off. Vimalakirti must be given three thousand blows in the morning and eight hundred blows in the evening.

In Sanskrit, Vimalakirti means "undefiled repute" or "pure name." He was also known as the Golden Grain Tathagata. Haven't you heard how a monk asked Master Chien of Yun Chu, "If he was the Golden Grain Tathagata, why then did he listen to the Dharma in the congregation of the Tathagata Shakyamuni?" Chien said, "He didn't contend over self and others. Someone who is greatly liberated has nothing to do with 'becoming Buddha' or 'not becoming Buddha.' If you say that he practices cultivation and strives to attain the Path of Buddhahood, this has even less to do with it." As the Perfect Enlightenment Scripture says, "If you use your routine mind to produce routine views, you will never be able to enter the Tathagata's great ocean of peaceful extinction."

Yung Chia said, "Whether he's right or wrong, people cannot know. Whether he goes against or goes along, the gods cannot fathom. If he goes along, then he turns toward the stage of the fruition of Buddhahood; if he goes against, then he enters the realms of sentient beings." Meditation Master Shou said, "Even if you can perfect yourself and get to this realm, you still can't follow your inclinations. Only when you have experienced the holy state without leaks can you go along or go against." Thus Hsueh Tou said, "Out of compassion for living beings, he suffers empty affliction." In the scripture Vimalakirti says, "Since sentient beings have illnesses, I also will have an illness." Hsueh Tou says, "Lying ill in Vaisali," because Vimalakirti manifested his illness in the city of Vaisali.

"His whole body withered and emaciated." Vimalakirti used his physical illness to preach the Dharma widely. He said, "This body has no permanence, no strength, no power or solidity; it's a thing that quickly decays, it can't be trusted. It produces suffering and trouble, a mass of diseases. It is something made of the heaps, elements, and sense media compounded together."

"The teacher of seven Buddhas comes." Manjusri was the teacher of seven Buddhas, but he obeyed the World Honored One's command to go to Vimalakirti and ask about his illness. "To the single room that's been swept repeatedly." Vimalakirti had cleared everything out of his room, just leaving his bench. When Manjusri arrived, he asked about the Dharma gate of nonduality, so Hsueh Tou says, "He asks about the gate of nonduality."

"Then Vimalakirti leans and falls." Vimalakirti's mouth was bent into a frown. Followers of Ch'an these days say that his speechlessness was the leaning and falling. But don't mistakenly go by the zero point of the scale.

Pushing you up onto a ten thousand fathom cliff, Hsueh Tou then says, "He doesn't lean and fall." With one hand he lifts up, with one hand he pushes down. Hsueh Tou has this kind of skill, and the way he uses it is sharp and clear. This line verifies his own previous comment, "What did Vimalakirti say?"

"The golden-haired lion has no place to look." It was not only this way at that time, but it's this way right now. Do you see old Vimalakirti? Even if the whole world, the mountains, rivers, grasses, trees, and forests all turned into a golden-haired lion (for you to ride, as does Manjusri), you still wouldn't be able to find him.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The image of a dog which, hit with a clod of dirt thrown by a man, ignores the man and chases the clod in anger, is found in the *Kasyapa-parivarta* (the old *Maharatnakuta* scripture); it symbolizes those who are afraid of the delights of the senses and seek deliverance in solitude and quiet—they never really become free because they are dependent on solitude and quiet, becoming every bit as much, and even more, miserable and confused as before when they again come in contact with the hustle and bustle of ordinary life.
- b. Vimalakirti's show of disease is the setting of the *Vimalakirtinirdesa*, the scripture spoken by Vimalakirti, a major Mahayana Buddhist scripture; at first Shakyamuni directed his great disciples one by one to go to ask after Vimalakirti, but each explained how in the past Vimalakirti had criticized their practices and

shattered their views, demolishing the dualistic (*samsara* vs. *nirvana*) standpoint of Hinayana (Lesser Vehicle) Buddhism (which is also symbolized by the 'dog chasing a clod' image of asceticism noted above). So after the disciples begged off, Shakyamuni then sent a host of bodhisattvas led by Manjusri to inquire after Vimalakirti; the latter took this opportunity to edify the bodhisattvas, and the discussion of nonduality, as well as miraculous displays and profound teachings by Vimalakirti, ensued.

# The Hermit of T'ung Feng Makes a Tiger's Roar

## POINTER

To hold the world fast without the slightest leak, so that all the people in the world lose their points and become tongue-tied—this is the true imperative for patchrobed monks.

To release a light from one's forehead that shines through the four quarters—this is the adamantine eye of patchrobed monks.

To touch iron and turn it into gold, to touch gold and turn it into iron, to suddenly capture and suddenly release—this is the staff of patchrobed monks.

To cut off the tongues of everyone in the world so that there's no place for them to breathe out, to make them fall back three thousand miles—this is the mettle of patchrobed monks.

But tell me, when one is not this way at all, who is he? To test I cite this to see.

## CASE

A monk came to the place of the hermit of T'ung Feng and asked, "If you suddenly encountered a tiger here, what then?"<sup>1</sup> The hermit made a tiger's roar.<sup>2</sup> The monk then made a gesture of fright.<sup>3</sup> The hermit laughed aloud.<sup>4</sup> The monk said, "You old thief!"<sup>5</sup> The hermit said, "What can you do about me?"<sup>6</sup> The monk gave up.<sup>7</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "This is all right, but these two wicked thieves only knew how to cover their ears to steal the bell."<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. The fellow is an expert at playing with shadows. Within the nest of weeds, there's one or a half.



2. He adds error to error. Nevertheless he does have teeth and claws. They are born together and die together. "Hearing the words, you should understand the source."
3. Two fellows playing with a mud ball. The monk saw his opportunity and acted. He seems to be right, but in reality he isn't.
4. This still amounts to something. In his laugh there's a sword. He can let go and he can also gather in.
5. You too must see through this. The monk has been defeated. The two of them both let go.
6. I would slap him across the ear. Too bad the monk let him go. He adds another layer of frost on top of snow.
7. Thus he was stopped. Neither of them understood. Heavens! Heavens!
8. The words are still in our ears. They have been censured by Hsueh Tou. But tell me, at that time, how should they have acted to avoid Hsueh Tou's criticism? No patchrobed monk in the world arrives.

#### COMMENTARY

The Ta Hsiung lineage (of Pai Chang Huai Hai) produced four hermits: Ta Mei,<sup>a</sup> Pai Yun, Hu Ch'i, and T'ung Feng.

Look at how those two men had such knowing eyes and capable hands. Tell me, where is the place that's difficult to understand? Though produced to meet the situation, the Ancients' one device, one object, one word, one phrase, are naturally leaping with life, since their eyes are perspicacious and true. Hsueh Tou picked this case to make people know wrong from right and discern gain and loss. Nevertheless, from his standpoint as a man who has arrived, though it's handled in terms of gain and loss, after all there is no gain or loss. If you view those Ancients in terms of gain and loss, you miss the point entirely. People of the present day must each comprehend the place where there's no gain or loss. If you only apply your mind to picking and choosing among words and phrases, when will you ever be done?

Haven't you heard how Great Master Yun Men said, "Foot-travellers, don't just wander over the country idly, just wanting to pick up and hold onto idle words. As soon as some old teacher's mouth moves, you immediately ask about Ch'an and

ask about Tao, ask about transcendence and accommodation, ask about how and what. You make great volumes of commentaries which you stuff into your bellies, pondering and calculating. Wherever you go you put your heads together by the stove in threes and fives, babbling on and on. These, you say, are words of eloquence; these, words in reference to the self; these, words in reference to things; these, words from within the essence. You try to comprehend the old fathers and mothers of your house. Once you have gobbled down your meal, you only speak of dreams and say, 'I have understood the Buddha Dharma.' You should know that if you go foot-travelling this way, you will never be done."

When the Ancients briefly picked it up and played with it, how could there be such views as victory and defeat, gain and loss, or right and wrong?

T'ung Feng had seen Lin Chi. At the time of the story he had built a hut deep in the mountains. This monk came there and asked, "If you suddenly encountered a tiger here, what then?" Feng then made a tiger's roar; he rightly went to the thing to act. This monk too knew how to meet error with error, so he made a gesture of fright. When the hermit laughed aloud, the monk said, "You old thief!" Feng said, "What can you do about me?" This is all right, but neither of them understood. From ancient times on down, they've met with other people's criticism. Thus Hsueh Tou said, "This is all right, but these two wicked thieves only knew how to cover their ears to steal the bell." Though both of them were thieves, nevertheless they didn't take the opportunity to act; hence, they were covering their own ears to steal the bell. With these two Elders, it's as though they set up battle lines of a million troops, but only struggled over the broom (for sweeping up casualties).

To discuss this matter, it is necessary to have the ability to kill people without blinking an eye. If you always let go and never capture, if you always kill and never bring to life, you won't avoid the scornful laughter of others. Although this is so, these Ancients still didn't have so many concerns. Observe how they both saw their opportunity and acted. Wu Tsu spoke of the concentration of supernatural powers at play, the concentration of the torch of wisdom, and the concentration of the King of Adornment. It's just that people of later times don't have their feet on the ground; they just go criticize the An-

cients and say there is gain and loss. Some say that the hermit clearly lost the advantage, but this has nothing to do with it.

Hsueh Tou said, "When these two men met, it was all letting go." When the monk said, "If you suddenly encountered a tiger here, then what?" and Feng made a tiger's roar, this was letting go. And when he said, "What can you do about me?" this too was letting go. In every instance they fell into the secondary level of activity. Hsueh Tou said, "If you want to act, then act." People these days hear such talk and say that at the time the hermit should have carried out the imperative for the monk. But you shouldn't blindly punish and beat the hermit.

As for Te Shan immediately hitting people when they came in through the gate, and Lin Chi immediately shouting at people when they came in through the gate—tell me, what was the intent of these Ancients? In the end Hsueh Tou makes his verse just like this. But tell me, in the end, how will you avoid "covering your own ears to steal the bell"?

#### VERSE

*If you don't grab it when you see it,*

You've stumbled by. It's already a thousand, ten thousand miles away.

*You'll think about it a thousand miles away.*

Regretting that you weren't careful from the first.  
Heavens! Heavens!

*Fine stripes—*

Take what's coming to you and get out, Reverend. What could he do—he didn't know to act.

*But he hasn't got claws and teeth.*

I only fear that his use of them will be ignorant. I'll talk to you when your claws and teeth are ready.

*Haven't you seen the sudden encounter on Mt. Ta Hsiung?*

If you have a rule, go by the rule; if you have no rule, go by the example.

*The vast sound and light shakes the earth—*

This tiger, after all, goes on this way. Still he amounts to something. How many sons are powerful men?

*Do great men of power see or not?*

Hsueh Tou is so kind. If you can open your eyes, you can be born together and die together. Hsueh Tou is creating complications.

*They take the tiger's tail and grab the tiger's whiskers.*

How will you take it when it suddenly appears? All the patchrobed monks in the world are taken in here. If one suddenly comes forth, I'd challenge him. I'm making you turn around and spew out your breath. Ha! I hit, saying, "Why didn't you say, 'You old thief!'"

#### COMMENTARY

"If you don't grab it when you see it, / You'll think about it a thousand miles away." Just at the point of danger, the monk couldn't use it at all; when the hermit said, "What can you do about me?" the monk should have given him some of his own provisions. If at that time he had been able to show his skill, the hermit would have had to have a last word. Both men only knew how to let go; they couldn't gather in. "If you don't grab it when you see it" is already white clouds for ten thousand miles; why did he go on to say, "You'll think about it a thousand miles away"?

"Fine stripes— / But he hasn't got claws and teeth." This is so, but a tiger also knows how to conceal his teeth and hide his claws. What could he do, though—he didn't know how to bite people.

"Haven't you seen the sudden encounter on Mt. Ta Hsiung? / The vast sound and light shakes the earth." One day Pai Chang asked Huang Po, "Where are you coming from?" Po said, "From down the mountain." Chang said, "See any tigers?" Po then made a tiger's roar. Chang took the axe at his side and made the gesture of chopping. Po held it fast and slapped him. That evening Chang went up into the hall and said, "Down Ta Hsiung Mountain there's a tiger; all of you must watch out for him when you're going and coming. Today I myself have been bitten by him."

Later Kuei Shan asked Yang Shan, "What about Huang Po's tiger story?" Yang said, "What is your esteemed opinion,

Teacher?" Kuei Shan said, "At the time Pai Chang should have chopped him to death with one blow; how did it come to this?" Yang Shan said, "Not so." Kuei Shan said, "What about it then?" Yang Shan said, "Not only did he ride the tiger's head, but he also knew how to take the tiger's tail." Kuei Shan said, "You do indeed have some precipitous phrases, Chi." Hsueh Tou draws on this to illumine the main case.

"The vast sound and light shakes the earth." This bit transforms freely. Hsueh Tou wants to have a road to show himself within the words. "Do great men of power see or not?" Do you see? "They take the tiger's tail and grab the tiger's whiskers." Here again this must be one's own. Even if you take the tiger's tail and grab the tiger's whiskers, you won't avoid me instantly piercing your nostrils.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. Ta Hsiung was the name of the mountain on which Ch'an Master Pai Chang Huai Hai lived and taught in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. It was known as Pai Chang because of its precipitous heights, and the master Huai Hai was also known by that name, according to custom. Ta Mei was actually an early successor of Ma Tsu Tao I, Pai Chang's teacher; the hermit of T'ung Feng was a successor of Lin Chi, who succeeded to Huang Po, Pai Chang's great disciple. Four of Lin Chi's successors were hermits.

# Yun Men's Kitchen Pantry and Main Gate

## POINTER

He holds the world fast without the slightest leak; he cuts off the myriad flows without keeping a drop. Open your mouth and you're wrong; hesitate in thought and you miss. But tell me, what is the barrier-penetrating eye? To test, I cite this to see:

## CASE

Yun Men imparted some words saying, "Everyone has a light;<sup>1</sup> when you look at it, you don't see it and it's dark and dim.<sup>2</sup> What is everybody's light?"<sup>3</sup>

He himself answered on their behalf, "The kitchen pantry and the main gate."<sup>4</sup> He also said, "A good thing isn't as good as nothing."<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. Black lacquer buckets.
2. When you look, you're blinded.
3. Mountains are mountains, rivers are rivers. Washing black ink in a bucket of lacquer.
4. He is very kind, but why is he creating complications?
5. He himself knew that he had only gotten halfway there; still, this amounts to something.

## COMMENTARY

In his room Yun Men imparted some words to teach people: "All of you—right where you stand, each and every one of you

has a beam of light shining continuously, now as of old, far removed from seeing or knowing. Though it's a light, when you're asked about it you don't understand— isn't it dark and dim?" For twenty years he handed down this lesson, but there was never anyone who understood his meaning.

Later Hsiang Lin asked Yun Men to speak on their behalf. Men said, "The kitchen pantry and the main gate." He also said, "A good thing isn't as good as nothing." Usually what he said in place of others was just a single sentence; why then are there two here? The first sentence barely opens a road for you to let you see. If you're for real, as soon as you hear it mentioned, you get right up and go. Yun Men feared people would get stuck here, so he also said, "A good thing is not as good as nothing." As before, he's swept it away for you.

As soon as they hear you mention "light," people these days immediately put a glare in their eyes and say, "Where is the kitchen pantry? Where is the main gate?" But this has nothing to do with it. Thus it is said, "Perceive the meaning on the hook; don't abide by the zero point of the scale." This matter is not in the eye or in the environment. To begin to understand you must cut off knowing and seeing, forget gain and loss, and become purified, naked, and perfectly at ease; each and every one must investigate on his own.

Yun Men said, "You come and go by daylight; you distinguish people by daylight. Suddenly it's midnight, and there's no sun, moon, or lamplight. If it's some place you've been to, then of course it's possible; in a place you have never been, can you even manage to get hold of something?"

(Shih T'ou's) *Merging of Difference and Sameness* says,

*Right within light there's darkness,*

*But don't see it as darkness:*

*Right within darkness there's light,*

*But don't meet it as light.*

If you cut off light and darkness, tell me, what is it? Thus it is said, "The mind flower emits light, shining on all the lands in the ten directions." P'an Shan said, "Light isn't shining on objects, nor do the objects exist. Light and objects both forgotten, then what is this?" Also it was said,

*This very seeing and hearing is not seeing and hearing—*

*But there's no other sound and form that can be offered to you.*

*Here, if you can understand that there's nothing at all,*

*You are free to separate, or not, essence and action.*

Just understand Yun Men's final statement thoroughly, then you can go back to the former one to roam at play. But ultimately, you do not make a living there. The ancient Vimalakirti said, "All things are established on a non-abiding basis." You mustn't go here to play with lights and shadows and give play to your spirit. Nor will it do to make up an understanding in terms of nothingness. An Ancient said, "Better you should give rise to a view of existence as big as Mt. Sumeru, than that you produce a view of nothingness as small as a mustard seed." People of the (lesser) two vehicles<sup>a</sup> often fall onesidedly into this view.

#### VERSE

*Spontaneously shining, ranged in the solitary light.*

The myriad forms and images. Guest and host intermingle. He snaps your nostrils around. What are you doing, blind men?

*He opens a route for you.*

Why only one route? Ten suns are shining side by side. He has managed to set down one route.

*Flowers fall, the tree has no shadow—*

What end is there to creating complications? Where will you seek it? He fills a black lacquer bucket with black ink.

*When looking, who doesn't see?*

Blind! You shouldn't always hold onto fences and grope along walls. Two blind men, three blind men . . .

*Seeing or not seeing—*

Both ends are cut off. Blind!



*Riding backwards on an ox, entering the Buddha shrine.*

Inside the main gate he joins his palms. Give me back the story. I hit, saying, "Where has he gone?" Hsueh Tou too is just making his living inside the ghost cave. Do you understand? At midnight the sun comes out, at noonday the midnight watch is sounded.

#### COMMENTARY

"Spontaneously shining, ranged in the solitary light." Originally, right where you stand, there's this beam of light; it's just that your use of it is dark. That's why Great Master Yun Men set out this light for you right in front of your faces. But say, what is everyone's light? "The kitchen pantry and the main gate." This is where Yun Men arrays the solitary light. P'an Shan said, "The mind-moon is solitary and full; its light engulfs myriad forms." This is the true, eternal, unique revelation.

Afterwards "He opens a route for you." Yun Men still feared that people would become attached to "The kitchen pantry, the main gate." Conceding for the moment the kitchen pantry, when the morning flowers fall and the tree has no shadow, when the sun has gone down and the moon goes dark and all of heaven and earth is black vastness—do you still see? "When looking, who doesn't see?" Tell me, who is it that doesn't see? Here, where "right within light there's darkness" and "right within darkness there's light," both are "like a step forward and a step backward." You must see for yourself.

Hsueh Tou says, "Seeing or not seeing," or versifies "A good thing isn't as good as nothing." Merged with seeing, still you don't see; merged with illumination, still you don't understand.

"Riding backwards on an ox, entering the Buddha shrine." He's gone into the black lacquer bucket. You must personally ride the ox into the Buddha shrine to see what it is that he's saying.

## TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The two vehicles refer to Buddhist disciples and self-enlightened sages, who strive only for the extinction of passion and personal suffering; they only realize the emptiness of ego and do not realize the emptiness of things as identical to the things themselves. They are apt to fall into the empty quiescence of subjective nothingness, intoxicated by trance. Bodhisattvas, however, realizing that existence itself is empty and not made so by annihilation, do not fear life or seek death, and arouse great kindness and compassion towards living beings, resolving that they all be liberated. If one clings to the idea of nothingness, this compassion is impossible.

# Medicine and Disease Subdue Each Other

## POINTER

A clear-eyed fellow has no nest: sometimes on the summit of the solitary peak weeds grow in profusion; sometimes he's naked and free in the bustling marketplace. Suddenly he appears as an angry titan with three heads and six arms; suddenly as Sun Face or Moon Face Buddha he releases the light of all-embracing mercy. In a single atom he manifests all physical forms; to save people according to their type, he mixes with mud and water. If suddenly he releases an opening upwards, not even the Buddha's eye could see him; even if a thousand sages appeared, they too would have to fall back three thousand miles. Is there anyone with the same attainment and same realization? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

Yun Men, teaching his community, said, "Medicine and disease subdue each other:<sup>1</sup> the whole earth is medicine;<sup>2</sup> what is your self?"<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. A compounded form cannot be grasped.
2. Bitter gourd is bitter to the root. He's put it over to one side.
3. Sweet melon is sweet to the stem. Where did he get this news?

## COMMENTARY

Yun Men said, "Medicine and disease subdue each other: the whole earth is medicine; what is your self?" Do all of you have

a way to get out? Twenty-four hours a day, concentrate on "towering like a mile-high wall." Te Shan's blows fall like rain, Lin Chi's shouts roll like thunder—putting this aside for the moment, Shakymuni is himself Shakyamuni and Maitreya is himself Maitreya. Those who don't know what it comes down to frequently understand by calling it "medicine and disease merging with each other." For forty-nine years, in more than three hundred assemblies, the World Honored One adapted to potential to set up the teachings—all of this was giving medicine in accordance with the disease, like exchanging sweet fruit for bitter gourds. Having purified your active faculties, he made you clean and free.

"The whole earth is medicine." Where will you sink your teeth into this? If you can sink your teeth in, I'll grant that you have a place to turn around and show some life; then you see Yun Men in person. If you look around and hesitate, you won't be able to get your teeth into it; Yun Men is the one under your feet.

"Medicine and disease subdue each other." This is just an ordinary proposition. If you cling to existence, he speaks of nonexistence for you; if you are attached to nonexistence, he speaks of existence for you. If you are attached to neither existence nor nonexistence, he manifests the sixteen-foot golden body for you in a pile of crap and rubbish, appearing and disappearing.

Right now this whole great earth is a profuse array of myriad forms, up to and including one's own self. At once it's medicine—at such a time, what will you call your self? If you only call it medicine, even by the time Maitreya Buddha is born down here, you still won't have seen Yun Men even in dreams. Ultimately, how is it? "Perceive the meaning on the hook; don't stick by the zero point of the scale."

One day Manjusri ordered Sudhana to pick medicinal herbs. He said, "If there is something that is not medicine, bring it to me." Sudhana searched all over, but there was nothing that was not medicine. So he went back and told Manjusri, "There is nothing that is not medicine." Manjusri said, "Gather something that is medicine." Sudhana then picked up a blade of grass and handed it to Manjusri. Manjusri held it up and showed it to the assembly, saying, "This medicine can kill people and it can also bring people to life."

This talk of medicine and disease subduing each other is extremely difficult to see. Yun Men often used it in his room to guide people. One day Elder Chin O called on Hsueh Tou. Chin O was an adept, an honorable worthy of the Yun Men succession. They discussed this statement "medicine and disease subdue each other" all night until dawn before they were finally able to exhaust its excellence. At this point no learned interpretations, thought or judgment can be employed. Afterwards, Hsueh Tou made a verse to see him off which said,

*Medicine and disease subdue each other—most difficult to see;  
The ten thousand locked gates indeed have no starting point.  
Wayfarer Chin O came calling;  
In one night we exhausted the waves of the ocean of learning.*

Hsueh Tou's subsequent verse is most effective. Is his meaning in the host or in the guest? You must see for yourself.

#### VERSE

*The whole earth is medicine:*

Who would you have discern the point? Scattering sand and dirt. Put it on a high shelf.

*Why have Ancients and moderns been so mistaken?*

There's an echo in the words. With one brush stroke they're all blotted out.

*I don't make the carriage behind closed doors—*

Great Hsueh Tou uses all his strength to help the assembly, but misfortune comes forth from his own door. In the calm vastness, not a hair is hanging. Who has any spare time? He is making a living in a ghost cave.

*The road through is naturally quiet and empty.*

Set foot on it and you enter the weeds. When you get on the horse, you'll see the road. He picks it up freely, undeniably outstanding.

*Wrong! Wrong!*

Twin swords fly through space. A single arrow fells two eagles.

*Though they be high as the sky, your nostrils have still been pierced.*

Your head has fallen. I hit, saying, "They've been pierced!"

#### COMMENTARY

"The whole earth is medicine: / Why have Ancients and moderns been so mistaken?" From ancient times till now those of you who have understood by calling it medicine have instantly gone wrong. Hsueh Tou said, "There's a kind of person who doesn't know how to cut off Ta Mei's footsteps, but merely says that (Ta Mei) was in too much of a hurry to go."<sup>a</sup> Hsueh Tou knew how to cut off Yun Men's footsteps.

Since this one line of his had thrown everyone in the world into confusion, Yun Men said, "When my staff is waves, you may go freely in all directions; when the whole earth is waves, I'll watch to see if you float or sink."

"I don't make the carriage behind closed doors—/The road through is naturally quiet and empty." Hsueh Tou speaks to open up a road for you: "If you build your carriage behind closed doors, and you bring it out the gate and it fits the ruts, what has this accomplished? I am not building the carriage behind closed doors here. When I go out the door, naturally it's quiet and empty." Here Hsueh Tou reveals a slight crack to let people see.

Still hurrying on, Hsueh Tou then says, "Wrong! Wrong!" Both Yun Men's former statement and his latter statement are wrong. Who would know that Hsueh Tou's opening up a road is also wrong? Since your nostrils are as high as the sky, why do they get pierced anyway? Do you want to understand? Then immerse yourself in this for thirty years. If you have a staff, I'll give you a staff; if you have no staff, you won't avoid having your nostrils pierced by others.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. When Ta Mei was about to die he said, "Coming, there is nothing to look to; going, there is nothing to pursue." Happening to hear

the cry of a squirrel, he said, "It's just this thing, not anything else. Keep it well—I am going to go." Later Hsueh Tou said of this, "This fellow was sloppy in life and fat-headed in death. 'Just this thing, not anything else'—what thing is this? Is there anything to impart, or not? Some people do not know how to cut off Ta Mei's footsteps, and merely say that he was in too much of a hurry to be on his way."

# Hsuan Sha's Guiding and Aiding Living Beings

## POINTER

The established methods of our school are thus: they break two into three. For profound talk entering into principle, you too must be piercing and penetrating.

Taking charge of the situation, he hits home and smashes to pieces the golden chains<sup>a</sup> and the hidden barrier. He acts according to the imperative, so that he obliterates all tracks and traces.

Tell me, where is there confusion? For those who have the eye on their forehead, I bring this up to see.

## CASE

Hsuan Sha, teaching the community, said, "The old adepts everywhere all speak of guiding and aiding living beings.<sup>1</sup> Supposing they encountered three kinds of sick person, how would they guide them?<sup>2</sup> With a blind person, they could pick up the gavel or raise the whisk, but he wouldn't see.<sup>3</sup> With a deaf person, he wouldn't hear the point of words.<sup>4</sup> With a mute person, if they had him speak, he wouldn't be able to speak.<sup>5</sup> But how would they guide such people? If they couldn't guide these people, then the Buddha Dharma has no effect."<sup>6</sup>

A monk asked Yun Men for instruction on this.<sup>7</sup> Yun Men said, "Bow."<sup>8</sup> The monk bowed and rose.<sup>9</sup> Yun Men poked at him with his staff; the monk drew back. Yun Men said, "You're not blind."<sup>10</sup> Then Yun Men called him closer; when the monk approached,<sup>11</sup> Men said, "You're not deaf."<sup>12</sup> Next Yun Men said, "Do you understand?"<sup>13</sup> The monk said, "I don't understand."<sup>14</sup> Yun Men said, "You're not mute."<sup>15</sup> At this the monk had an insight.<sup>16</sup>



## NOTES

1. They set up their shops according to their capacities, according to whether their houses are rich or poor.
2. He is beating the weeds just to frighten the snakes. My mouth is agape, my eyes open wide. You must fall back three thousand miles.
3. Truly blind! This is guiding and aiding living beings. One doesn't have to be blind (not to see).
4. Truly deaf! This is guiding and aiding living beings. One doesn't have to be have to be deaf (not to hear). Who hasn't heard yet?
5. Truly mute! This is guiding and aiding living beings. One doesn't have to be mute (to be unable to speak). Who hasn't spoken yet?
6. How true these words are! I fold my hands and submit, having already accepted. I'll strike!
7. He wants everyone to know too. This is pertinent.
8. When the wind blows, the grasses bend. Bah!
9. This monk has broken the staff.
10. Truly blind! Better not say this monk is blind.
11. The second ladleful of foul water douses the monk. Avalokitesvara has come. At that time the monk should have given a shout.
12. Truly deaf. Better not say the monk is deaf.
13. Why doesn't Yun Men offer his own provisions? At that time the monk shouldn't have made a sound.
14. A doubled case. Heavens! Heavens!
15. Truly mute. His mouth is babbling. Better not say this monk is mute.
16. He draws his bow after the thief has gone. What bowl<sup>b</sup> is he looking for?

## COMMENTARY

Hsuan Sha had investigated till he reached the point of eliminating all emotional defilement and conceptual thought, where he became purified and naked, free and unfettered; only thus could he speak this way. At this time, when (Ch'an flourished) and the various monasteries all looked to one another, Hsuan Sha would often teach his community by saying, "The old adepts, all over, all speak of guiding and aiding living

beings. If they should encounter three kinds of sick person, how would they guide them? With a blind person, they could pick up the gavel or raise the whisk, but he wouldn't see. With a deaf person, he wouldn't hear the point of words. With a mute person, if they had him speak, he wouldn't be able to speak. So how would they teach such people? If they couldn't guide these people, then the Buddha Dharma has no effect." If you people right now understand this as being blind, deaf, and mute, you'll never be able to find it. Thus it is said, "Don't die in the words." To attain, you must understand Hsuan Sha's meaning.

Hsuan Sha often used this statement to guide people. There was a monk who had been with Hsuan Sha for a long time. One day, when Hsuan Sha went up into the hall, this monk asked, "Will you permit me to present a theory of the story of the three kinds of sick person, Teacher?" Hsuan Sha said, "Go ahead." The monk then bade farewell and left. Sha said, "Wrong! That's not it." Did this monk understand Hsuan Sha's meaning? Fa Yen subsequently said, "When I heard Master Ti Tsang tell about this monk I finally understood the story of the three kinds of sick person." If you say this monk didn't understand, then why would Fa Yen talk like this? If you say he did understand, then why did Hsuan Sha say "wrong"?

One day Ti Tsang said to Hsuan Sha, "Teacher, I hear you have a saying about three kinds of sick person—is this so or not?" Sha said, "It is so." Tsang said, "I have eyes, ears, nose, and tongue—how will you guide me, Teacher?" Hsuan Sha immediately stopped. If you can understand Hsuan Sha's meaning, how could it be in the words and phrases? Ti Tsang's understanding was naturally outstanding.

Later a monk took this story up with Yun Men. Men immediately understood his intentions and said, "Bow." The monk bowed and rose. Men poked at him with his staff, and the monk drew back. Men said, "You're not blind." Then Men called him closer. When the monk approached, Men said, "You're not deaf." Next he said, "Do you understand?" When the monk said, "I don't understand," Men said, "You're not mute." At this the monk attained insight. At the time, if the monk had been for real, when Yun Men told him to bow he would have immediately turned over his meditation seat. Then how could so many complications have appeared? But tell me, are Yun Men's understanding and Hsuan Sha's understanding

the same or different? The understanding of those two men was the same.

Look at how the Ancients appeared and created millions of kinds of expedient methods. "The meaning is on the hook." How much exertion to make each and every one of today's people understand this one matter!

My late teacher Wu Tsu said, "One man can speak, though he doesn't understand; one man, though he understands, cannot speak. If these two men came calling, how would you be able to discriminate between them? If you can't distinguish these two, in fact you will be unable to free what is stuck and untie what is bound for people. If you can distinguish them, then as soon as you see them come through the gate, you put on your straw sandals and walk around several times within their bellies. If you still haven't awakened on your own, what bowl are you looking for?<sup>b</sup> Go away!"

Now you better not make your understanding in terms of blind, deaf, and mute. Thus it is said, "His eyes see forms as though blind, and his ears hear sounds as though deaf." Again, it was said,

*Though it fills his eyes, he doesn't see form;  
Though it fills his ears, he doesn't hear sound—  
Manjusri is always covering his eyes,  
Avalokitesvara blocks his ears.*

At this point, only if your eyes see as though blind and your ears hear as though deaf will you be able to not be at odds with Hsuan Sha's meaning. Do all of you know where the blind, deaf, and mute fellows are at? Look closely at Hsueh Tou's verse, which says,

#### VERSE

*Blind, deaf, mute—*

Already there before it's said. The three openings (eye, ear, mouth) are all illumined. It's already been made into one piece.

*Soundless, without any adjustments to potentialities.*

Where will you search? Can you make any judgments?  
What have they got to do with it?

*In the heavens, on earth—*

With the correct principle, Hsueh Tou is on his own. I am also thus.

*Laughable, lamentable.*

Laugh at what? Lament over what? Half light, half dark.

*Li Lü can't discern the true form;*

Blind man! A skillful craftsman leaves no traces. Truly blind!

*How can Shih K'uang recognize the mystic tune?*

Deaf man! No reward has been established for the great achievement. Truly deaf.

*How can this compare to sitting alone beneath an empty window?*

You must be this way to attain. Don't make your living in a ghost cave. Instantly Hsueh Tou smashes the lacquer bucket.

*The leaves fall, the flowers bloom—each in its own time.*

What time and season is it right now? You mustn't understand it as unconcern. Today goes from morning to evening and tomorrow too goes from morning to evening.

*Again Hsueh Tou said, "Do you understand or not?"*

Again he speaks the words of the verse.

*An iron hammer head with no hole.*

Take what's coming to you and get out! Too bad—Hsueh Tou let go, so I'll hit.

#### COMMENTARY

"Blind, deaf, mute— / Soundless, without any adjustments to potentialities." All your seeing and not seeing, hearing and not hearing, speaking and not speaking—Hsueh Tou has swept it all away at once for you. In fact, views in terms of blindness, deafness, and muteness, and calculations and judgments of what's right to suit potentials are at once silenced and cut off; none of them can be applied. This transcendental matter can be called real blindness, real deafness, real muteness, without potentials and without adjustments.

"In the heavens, on earth— / Laughable, lamentable." Hsueh Tou lifts up with one hand and pushes down with one hand. But say, laugh at what? Lament over what? It's worth laughing joyously that this blindness is not really blind, that this deafness is not really deaf, that this muteness is not really mute. It's worth lamenting being clearly not blind, yet still being blind, being clearly not deaf, yet still being deaf, being clearly not mute, yet still being mute.

"Li Lü can't discern the true form." If you can't tell green from yellow or red from white, then you're really blind. Li Lü was a man of the time of the Yellow Emperor (third millennium B.C.); from a hundred paces away he could see the tip of the finest hair—his eyes were very clear. As the Yellow Emperor was crossing the Red River, he dropped a pearl down into the water; he ordered Li Lü to look for it, but he couldn't find it. He ordered Ch'i Hou to search for it, but he couldn't find it either. Finally he ordered Hsiang Wang to look, and he at last recovered it. Thus it was said, "Hsiang Wang's glory shone bright at all times; Li Lü's actions were like waves flooding the sky." Even Li Lü's eye can't discern the true form of this lofty place.

"How can Shih K'uang recognize the mystic tune?" In Chou times (first millennium B.C.) Duke Ching of Chin had a son (some say it was the music teacher of Duke P'ing of Chin) named Shih K'uang Tzu Yeh, who was well able to distinguish the five notes and six pitches. He could hear the sound of ants fighting on the other side of a mountain. At that time (the states of) Chin and Ch'u were contending for hegemony. Shih K'uang had but to strum his guitar and set the strings in motion in order to know that Ch'u would have no success in the war. Although he was like this, Hsueh Tou says that even he would be unable to recognize the mystic tune. People who, even though they are not deaf, are nonetheless still deaf, even if they were Shih K'uang, still couldn't recognize the mystic tune of this lofty place.

Hsueh Tou says, "I am not Li Lü, nor am I Shih K'uang—how can this compare to sitting alone beneath an empty window? The leaves fall, the flowers bloom—each in its own time." If you get to this realm, though you see, it's like not seeing; though you hear, it's like not hearing; though you speak, it's like not speaking. When hungry you eat and when

tired you sleep. You let the leaves fall and the flowers bloom. When the leaves fall it's autumn; when the flowers bloom it's spring—each has its own time and season.

Having swept it clean for you, Hsueh Tou again puts down a single path and says, "Do you understand or not?" Hsueh Tou's strength is exhausted and his spirit wearied; he can just manage to say, "An iron hammer head with no (handle) hole." Be quick to set your eyes on this line; only then will you see. If you hesitate, you've missed it again.

(Master Yuan Wu held up his whisk and said,) Do you see? (Then he rapped once on the meditation seat and said,) Do you hear? (Then he came down from his seat and said,) Can you speak?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "Golden chains" is a classic Buddhist metaphor for the moral code or behavioral discipline, one of the three Buddhist studies. Though one renounces society to become a monk or nun, and is thus freed from the problems of secular life, one is said to be still bound by the "golden chains" of precepts. Attachment to precepts, pride in one's way of life, or belief in the efficacy of mere morality or ritual, is called a form of bondage in Buddhist teaching. In Ch'an this is extended to refer to the whole of the Buddhist teachings, to all sense of realization or attainment, attachment to holiness, which still must be transcended before one is really free. This is like the image of "gold dust in the eyes"; though gold (Buddha Dharma) is precious, gold chains still bind and gold dust still blinds: the qualities of Buddhahood are not to be set up as external objects of attainment.
- b. The "bowl," from which one eats and drinks, symbolizes a line of reasoning or doctrine which one attempts to use to get the "nourishment" of understanding.

# The Hands and Eyes of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion

## POINTER

If your whole body were an eye, you still wouldn't be able to see it. If your whole body were an ear, you still wouldn't be able to hear it. If your whole body were a mouth, you still wouldn't be able to speak of it. If your whole body were mind, you still wouldn't be able to perceive it.

Now leaving aside "whole body" for the moment, if suddenly you had no eyes, how would you see? Without ears, how would you hear? Without a mouth, how would you speak? Without a mind, how would you perceive? Here, if you can unfurl a single pathway, then you'd be a fellow student with the ancient Buddhas. But leaving aside "studying" for the moment, under whom would you study?

## CASE

Yun Yen asked Tao Wu, "What does the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion use so many hands and eyes for?"<sup>1</sup>

Wu said, "It's like someone reaching back groping for a pillow in the middle of the night."<sup>2</sup>

Yen said, "I understand."<sup>3</sup>

Wu said, "How do you understand it?"<sup>4</sup>

Yen said, "All over the body are hands and eyes."<sup>5</sup>

Wu said, "You have said quite a bit there, but you've only said eighty percent of it."<sup>6</sup>

Yen said, "What do you say, Elder Brother?"<sup>7</sup>

Wu said, "Throughout the body are hands and eyes."<sup>8</sup>

## NOTES

1. At that time Tao Wu should have given him some of his own

- provisions. Why are you constantly running around? Why do you ask, Reverend?
2. Why didn't Tao Wu use his own provisions? One blind man leading a crowd of blind men.
  3. He adds error to error. He's cheating everyone. There's no different dirt in the same hole. Yun Yen doesn't avoid running afoul of the point and cutting his hand.
  4. Why bother to inquire further? He still had to ask; Yun Yen should be challenged.
  5. What does this have to do with it? He's making his living in the ghost cave, washing a lump of dirt with mud.
  6. There's no different dirt in the same hole. When the manservant sees the maidservant, he takes care. A leper drags along his companions.
  7. How can one get it by accepting another's interpretation? Tao Wu too should be challenged.
  8. The frog cannot leap out of the basket. He's snatched your eyes and made off with your tongue. Has he gotten a hundred percent or not? He's calling daddy poppa.

#### COMMENTARY

Yun Yen and Tao Wu were fellow students under Yao Shan. For forty years Yun Yen's side did not touch his mat. Yao Shan produced the whole Ts'ao-Tung school. There were three men with whom the Path of Dharma flourished: descended from Yun Yen was Tung Shan; descended from Tao Wu was Shih Shuang; and descended from Ch'uan Tzu was Chia Shan.

The Bodhisattva of Great Compassion (Avalokitesvara) has eighty-four thousand symbolic arms. Great Compassion has this many hands and eyes—do all of you? Pai Chang said, "All sayings and writings return to one's self."

Yun Yen often followed Tao Wu, to study and ask questions to settle his discernment with certainty. One day he asked him, "What does the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion use so many hands and eyes for?" Right at the start Tao Wu should have given him a blow of the staff across his back, to avoid so many complications appearing later. But Tao Wu was compassionate—he couldn't be like this. Instead, he gave Yun Yen an explanation of the reason, meaning to make him understand immediately. Instead (of hitting him) Tao Wu said, "It's



like someone reaching back groping for a pillow in the middle of the night." Groping for a pillow in the depths of the night without any lamplight—tell me, where are the eyes?

Yun Yen immediately said, "I understand." Wu said, "How do you understand it?" Yen said, "All over the body are hands and eyes." Wu said, "You have said quite a bit there, but you've only said eighty percent of it." Yen said, "What do you say, Elder Brother?" Wu said, "Throughout the body are hands and eyes."

But say, is "all over the body" right, or is "throughout the body" right? Although they seem covered with mud, nevertheless they are bright and clean. People these days often make up emotional interpretations and say that "all over the body" is wrong, while "throughout the body" is right—they're merely chewing over the Ancients' words and phrases. They have died in the Ancients' words, far from realizing that the Ancients' meaning isn't in the words, and that all talk is used as something that can't be avoided. People these days add footnotes and set up patterns, saying that if one can penetrate this case, then this can be considered understanding enough to put an end to study. Groping with their hands over their bodies and over the lamp and the pillar, they all make a literal understanding of "throughout the body." If you understand this way, you degrade those Ancients quite a bit.

Thus it is said, "He studies the living phrase; he doesn't study the dead phrase." You must cut off emotional defilements and conceptual thinking, become clean and naked, free and unbound—only then will you be able to see this saying about Great Compassion.

Haven't you heard how Ts'ao Shan asked a monk, "How is it when (the Dharmakaya, the body of reality) is manifesting form in accordance with beings, like the moon (reflected) in the water?" The monk said, "Like an ass looking at a well." Shan said, "You have said quite a lot, but you've only said eighty percent of it." The monk said, "What do you say, Teacher?" Shan said, "It's like the well looking at the ass." This is the same meaning as the main case.

If you go to their words to see, you'll never be able to get out of Tao Wu's and Yun Yen's trap. Hsueh Tou, as an adept, no longer dies in the words; he walks right on Tao Wu's and Yun Yen's heads to versify, saying,

## VERSE

*"All over the body" is right—*

Four limbs, eight joints. This isn't yet the ultimate abode  
of patchrobed monks.

*"Throughout the body" is right—*

There's half on the forehead. You're still in the nest.  
Blind!

*Bringing it up is still a hundred thousand miles away.*

It won't do to let Tao Wu and Yun Yen go. Why only a  
hundred thousand miles?

*Spreading its wings, the Roc soars over the clouds of the six  
compounds<sup>b</sup>—*

A tiny realm—I had thought it would be extraordinary.  
Check!

*It propels the wind to beat against the waters of the four  
oceans.*

A bit of dust—I had thought no one in the world could  
cope with you. Wrong!

*What speck of dust suddenly arises?*

Again he's adding footnotes for Ch'an people. Cut! He's  
picked it up, but where has he put it?

*What wisp of hair hasn't stopped?*

Exceptional! Special! Blown away. Cut!

*You don't see!*

Again this way.

*The net of jewels hanging down in patterns; reflections upon  
reflections.*

So the great Hsueh Tou is doing this kind of thing—too  
bad! As before he's creating complications.

*Where do the hands and eyes on the staff come from?*

Bah! He draws his bow after the thief has gone. I can't let  
you go. No one in the world has any way to show some  
life. Hsueh Tou has let go, but he still must take a beat-  
ing. Again I hit and say, "Tell me, is mine right or is  
Hsueh Tou's right?"

*Bah!*

After three or four shouts, then what?

## COMMENTARY

"All over the body is right—/ Throughout the body is right." Whether you say reaching back with the hand groping for a pillow is it, or running the hand over the body is it, if you make up such interpretations, you're doing nothing but making your living in a ghost cave. In the end neither "all over the body" nor "throughout the body" is right. If you want to see this story of Great Compassion by means of emotional consciousness, in fact you're still a hundred thousand miles away. Hsueh Tou can play with a phrase—reviving, he says, "Bringing it up is still a hundred thousand miles away."

In the subsequent lines Hsueh Tou versifies what was extraordinary about Tao Wu and Yun Yen, saying, "Spreading its wings, the Roc soars over the clouds of the six compounds<sup>a</sup>—/ It propels the wind to beat against the waters of the four oceans." The great Roc swallows dragons: with his wings he sends the wind to beat against the waters; the waters part, then the Roc captures the dragon and swallows it. Hsueh Tou is saying that if you can propel the wind against the waves like the great Roc, you would be very brave and strong indeed.

If such actions are viewed with the thousand hands and eyes of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion, it's just a little bit of dust suddenly arising, or like a wisp of hair ceaselessly blown by the wind. Hsueh Tou says, "If you take running the hands over the body as the hands and eyes of Great Compassion, what is this good for?" In fact this is just not enough for this story of the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion. Thus, Hsueh Tou says, "What speck of dust suddenly arises? / What wisp of hair hasn't stopped?"

Hsueh Tou said of himself that an adept at once wipes away his tracks. Nevertheless, at the end of the verse as usual he broke down and gave a comparison—as before, he's still in the cage. "You don't see? / The net of jewels hanging down in patterns, reflections upon reflections." Hsueh Tou brings out the clear jewels of Indra's net to use as patterns hanging down. But tell me, where do the hands and eyes come to rest?

In the Hua Yen school they designate four Dharma realms: first, the Dharma realm of principle, to explain one-flavor equality; second, the Dharma realm of phenomena, to explain that principle in its entirety becomes phenomena. Third, the

Dharma realm of principle and phenomena unobstructed, to explain how principle and phenomena merge without hindrance; fourth, the Dharma realm of no obstruction among phenomena, to explain that every phenomenon everywhere enters all phenomena, that all things everywhere embrace all things, all intermingling simultaneously without obstruction. Thus it is said, "As soon as a single speck of dust arises, the whole earth is contained therein; each atom contains boundless Dharma realms. That being so for each atom, it is so for all atoms."

As for the net of jewels; in front of Indra's Dharma Hall of Goodness, there's a net made of jewels. Hundreds of thousands of jewels are reflected in every individual jewel, and each jewel is reflected in hundreds of thousands of jewels. Center jewel and surrounding jewels reflect back and forth, multiplying and remultiplying the images endlessly. This is used to illustrate the Dharma realm of no obstruction among phenomena.

In the old days National Teacher Hsien Shou set up a demonstration using mirrors and a lamp. He placed ten mirrors around the circumference (of a room) and put a lamp in the center. If you observed any one mirror, you saw nine mirrors mirroring the lamp, mirrors and lamp all appearing equally and perfectly clearly.

Thus when the World Honored One first achieved true enlightenment, without leaving the site of enlightenment he ascended into all the heavens of the thirty-three celestial kingdoms, and at nine gatherings in seven places he expounded the Hua Yen scripture.

Hsueh Tou uses Indra's jewel net to impart the teaching of the Dharma realm of no obstruction among phenomena. The six aspects<sup>b</sup> are very clear; that is, the all-inclusive, the separate, the sameness, the difference, the formation, and the disintegration. Raise one aspect and all six are included. Because living beings in their daily activities are unaware of it, Hsueh Tou raises the clear jewels of Indra's net hanging down in patterns to describe this saying about the Bodhisattva of Great Compassion. It's just like this: if you are well able, amidst the jewel net, to understand the staff and the marvellous functioning of supernatural powers going out and coming in unobstructed, then you can see the hands and eyes of the Bodhisattva. That's why Hsueh Tou says, "Where do the hands

and eyes on the staff come from?" This is to make you attain realization at the staff and obtain fulfillment at a shout.

When Te Shan hit people as soon as they came in through the gate, when Lin Chi shouted at people as soon as they came in through the gate, tell me, where were the hands and eyes? And tell me, why did Hsueh Tou go on at the end to utter the word "Bah!""? Investigate!

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The six compounds are the six senses—eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and their respective sense-fields.
- b. The six aspects of all things are defined in terms of the interdependent coproduction or relative coexistence of all things. The classic metaphor is of a house: the house represents the all-inclusive aspect, its beams and such represent the separate, or distinct aspect; since the beams, etc., join to form a house and nothing else, this is their aspect of sameness, but since they depend on each other as individual parts which are not the same, this is their aspect of difference. As they collectively create a house, this is the aspect of formation, but since each part has its own position and does not individually create anything, this is the aspect of disintegration. Put another way, one compound contains many elements or qualities; this is the all-inclusive aspect. The many qualities or elements are not one; this is the separate, or distinct aspect. Many functions or meanings are not at odds with each other; this is the aspect of sameness. From these many functions or meanings, interdependent co-production takes place; this is the aspect of formation. These conditions each abide in their own nature, without moving; this is the aspect of disintegration. (This explanation is from the section on Fa Yen Ch'an in the *Jen T'ien Yen Mu*, "Eye of Humans and Gods.")

# Chih Men's Body of Wisdom

## POINTER

Even the thousand sages<sup>a</sup> have not transmitted the single phrase before sound. The single thread right before us is perpetually unbroken. Purified and naked, free and unbound, hair dishevelled and ears alert—tell me, what about it? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

A monk asked Chih Men, "What is the body of wisdom?"<sup>1</sup> Chih Men said, "An oyster swallowing the bright moon."<sup>2</sup>

The monk asked, "What is the function of wisdom?"<sup>3</sup> Chih Men said, "A rabbit getting pregnant."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. Throughout the body there are no reflected images. It cuts off the tongues of everyone in the world. What's he using "body" for?
2. Leaving aside for the moment "the light engulfs myriad forms," what is the affair of the correct eye on the staff? The crooked does not conceal the straight. Chih Men is adding a layer of frost on snow.
3. Fall back three thousand miles! What does he want "function" for?
4. Danger! A bitter gourd is bitter to the root, a sweet melon is sweet to the stem. If you make your living in the shadows of the light, then you won't get out of Chih Men's nest. If there is someone who can come out, tell me, is this the body of wisdom or the function of wisdom? In essence this is adding mud to dirt.

## COMMENTARY

When Chih Men said, "An oyster swallowing the bright moon" and "A rabbit getting pregnant," in both he used a mid-autumn sense; even so, the Ancient's meaning was not in the oyster or the rabbit. As Chih Men was a venerable adept in the congregation of Yun Men,<sup>b</sup> each of his phrases had to contain three phrases; that is, the phrase that contains heaven and earth, the phrase that cuts off the myriad streams, and the phrase that follows the waves. Moreover, without using any prearranged maneuvers, each of his phrases is spontaneously appropriate. Thus he went to the danger point to answer this monk's questions, showing a bit of his sharp point—he was undeniably extraordinary. Nevertheless, this ancient never played with the shadows of a light, he just pointed out a bit of a road for you to make you see.

This monk said, "What is the body of wisdom?" Chih Men said, "An oyster swallowing the bright moon." Oysters contain bright pearls: (it is said that) when the mid-autumn moon comes out, the oysters float to the surface, open their mouths, and swallow the moonlight; from the effects of this, pearls are produced. If there is moonlight in mid-autumn, the pearls are many; without a moon, the pearls are few.

The monk also asked, "What is the function of wisdom?" Chih Men said, "A rabbit getting pregnant." The meaning of this is no different. The rabbit belongs to (the female, negative principle) Yin (to which the moon also belongs); in mid-autumn when the moon comes out, the rabbits open their mouths and swallow its light, thus becoming pregnant. Here too, if there's moonlight the offspring are many; without a moon, they're few.

That Ancient's answer was free from so many concerns; he just made temporary use of these meanings to answer about the light of wisdom. Although his answer was this way, his meaning wasn't in the words and phrases. It's just that later people go to his words to make a living. Haven't you heard how P'an Shan said,

*The mind-moon is solitary and full:  
Its light engulfs the myriad forms.*

*The light is not shining on objects,  
Nor do the objects exist—  
Light and objects both forgotten,  
Then what is this?*

People these days just stare and call this the light: from their feelings they produce interpretations, driving spikes into empty space.

An Ancient said, "Day and night all of you people release a great light from the gates of your six senses; it shines through mountains, rivers, and the great earth. It's not only your eyes that release light—nose, tongue, body and mind also all release light." To get here you simply must clean up your six sense faculties so that you're without the slightest concern, purified and naked, free and unbound—only then will you see where this story is at. Hsueh Tou does his verse just this way:

#### VERSE

*One piece of empty solidity, beyond saying and feeling;  
Stir your mind and you err, move your thoughts and  
you're obstructed. Not even Buddha's eye can catch sight  
of it.*

*From this humans and gods see Subhuti.*

Subhuti should be given thirty blows. Why make use of this old fellow? Even Subhuti has to fall back three thousand miles.

*The oyster swallowing, the mysterious rabbit—deep, deep  
meaning:*

You'd have to be the man himself to understand. What intention did he have? What further need for "deep, deep meaning"?

*Having been given to Ch'an people, it makes them fight and  
struggle.*

When shields and spears are already at rest, then there's great peace under heaven. Do you understand? I hit, saying, "How many blows can you take, Reverend?"



## COMMENTARY

"One piece of empty solidity, beyond saying and feeling." With a single line, Hsueh Tou has versified it well: naturally he can see the Ancient's meaning. What is it that the six senses are brimming with? It's just this one mass, empty and bright, solid and quiescent. You don't need to go to heaven to look for it. You don't have to seek it from someone else. The perpetual light spontaneously appears before us: right here in this very place it towers up like a mile-high wall, beyond verbal appellation and mental sense.

Fa Yen's verse on perfect reality says,

*When reasoning is exhausted, saying and feeling are  
forgotten;  
How could this be properly described?  
Wherever I go, the frosty night's moon  
Falls as it may on the valley ahead.  
The fruits are ripe and heavy with monkeys,  
The mountains go on so far it seems I've lost my  
way.  
When I raise my head, there's a remnant of illumination left—  
Actually this is west of my dwelling place.*

Thus it is said,

*Mind is the faculty, things are the objects;  
Both are like flaws on a mirror.  
When the defilement of objects is obliterated, the  
light first appears.  
When mind and things are both forgotten, nature is  
real.*

It is also said,

*I've always lived in a three-section reed hut;  
In the spiritual light of the one Path, myriad objects  
are at rest.  
Don't use right and wrong to judge me—  
Fleeting life and its rationalizations have nothing to  
do with me.*

These verses too make you see "One piece of empty solidity, beyond saying and feeling."

"From this humans and gods see Subhuti." Haven't you heard how Subhuti was sitting quietly on a cliff when all the gods showered him with flowers to praise him: the venerable Subhuti said, "Who is showering down these flowers in praise?" A god said, "I am Brahma." Subhuti said, "Why are you offering praise?" The god said, "I honor you for being good at expounding the transcendence of wisdom." Subhuti said, "I have never spoken a single word about wisdom; why offer praise?" The god said, "You didn't speak and I didn't hear—no speaking and no hearing is true wisdom," and again he caused the earth to tremble and flowers to shower. See how Subhuti expounded wisdom so well, without speaking of its body or its function. If at this you can see, then you can see Chih Men's saying, "An oyster swallowing the bright moon" and "A rabbit getting pregnant."

Though the Ancient's meaning was not in the spoken phrases, nevertheless in his answer there was a deep, deep meaning. This caused Hsueh Tou to say, "The oyster swallowing, the mysterious rabbit—deep, deep meaning." Here, "Having been given to Ch'an people, it makes them fight and struggle." The followers of Ch'an in the world have haggled over Chih Men's answers profusely and noisily; there's never been a single person who has even seen him in a dream. If you want to be a fellow student with Chih Men and Hsueh Tou, you must first set your eyes on it for yourself.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. In Chinese convention, multiples of ten represent infinite numbers; ten thousand especially is so used and really means "myriad." Hence "the thousand sages" means "all the sages."
- b. Chih Men was a successor of the Yun Men lineage in the third generation; his teacher was Yun Men's great disciple Hsiang Lin Teng Yuan.

# Yen Kuan's Rhinoceros

## POINTER

To transcend emotion, detach from views, remove bonds and dissolve sticking points, to uphold the fundamental vehicle of transcendence and support the treasury of the eye of the true Dharma, you must also respond equally in all ten directions, be crystal clear in all respects, and directly attain to such a realm. But tell me, are there any who attain alike, realize alike, die alike and live alike? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

One day Yen Kuan called to his attendant, "Bring me my rhinoceros-horn fan."<sup>1</sup>

The attendant said, "The fan is broken."<sup>2</sup>

Yen Kuan said, "If the fan is broken, bring the rhinoceros back to me."<sup>3</sup>

The attendant had no reply.<sup>4</sup>

T'ou Tzu said, "I do not refuse to bring it out, but I fear the horn on its head will be imperfect."<sup>5</sup> Hsueh Tou commented, "I want an imperfect horn."<sup>6</sup>

Shih Shuang said, "If I return it to the Master, then I won't have it."<sup>7</sup> Hsueh Tou commented, "The rhino is still there."<sup>8</sup>

Tzu Fu drew a circle and wrote the word 'rhino' inside it.<sup>9</sup> Hsueh Tou commented, "Why did you not bring it out before?"<sup>10</sup>

Pao Fu said, "The Master is aged; he should ask someone else."<sup>11</sup> Hsueh Tou commented, "What a pity to have worked hard without accomplishing anything."<sup>12</sup>

## NOTES

1. He creates quite a few complications. How can it compare with the fine scene here?

2. What a pity! What is he saying?
3. He's broken down quite a bit. Yu province is still all right; the worst suffering is in Korea. What does the master want with the rhinoceros?
4. After all he's a hammerhead without a hole. What a pity!
5. This seems to be like it, but nevertheless he has two heads and three faces. He is still speaking theoretically.
6. What is it good for? He adds error to error.
7. What is he saying? It's right under his nose.
8. Danger! He almost mistook it. Pull its head back!
9. Grass that's withered isn't worth bringing out. He's a fellow playing with a shadow.
10. He doesn't distinguish gold from brass. He too is a fellow in the weeds.
11. In an out of the way place he rebukes an official. What is he doing, avoiding hardship yet speaking of his suffering?
12. You yourself are included. It would be even better to give thirty blows of the staff. Clearly.

### COMMENTARY

Yen Kuan one day called to his attendant, "Bring me my rhinoceros-horn fan." Although this matter does not lie in words, yet if you want to test someone's ordinary disposition and ability, still it is necessary to be able to use words in this way to show it. On the last day of the last month of your life, if you can find strength and be the Master, even when myriad visions appear in profusion, you can look upon them without being moved: this can be called accomplishment without accomplishment, effortless power.

Yen Kuan was Ch'an Master Chi An; he used to have a fan made of rhinoceros horn. At the time, how could Yen Kuan not have known that the fan was broken? He purposely asked the attendant, and the attendant said, "The fan is broken." Observe how that Ancient was always within It twenty-four hours a day, encountering It everywhere; Yen Kuan said, "If the fan is broken, bring the rhinoceros back to me." But tell me, what did he want with the rhinoceros? He just wanted to test the man to see whether or not he knew where it was at.

T'ou Tzu said, "I do not refuse to bring it out, but I fear the head's horn will be imperfect." Hsueh Tou said, "I want the imperfect horn." He too goes to the phrase to match wits.

Shih Shuang said, "If I return it to the Master, then I won't have it." Hsueh Tou says, "The rhino is still there."

Tzu Fu drew a circle and wrote the word "rhino" inside; because he had succeeded to Yang Shan, he always liked to use objects to teach people and illustrate this matter. Hsueh Tou says, "Why didn't you bring it out before?" He pierced his nostrils too.

Pao Fu said, "The Master is aged; he should ask someone else." These words are most appropriate; the preceding three quotes are after all easy to see, but the words of this one phrase have a profound meaning. Yet Hsueh Tou has broken them up too. When I was at Librarian Ch'ing's place in the old days, I understood the reasoning; he said, "The Master is old and senile; getting the head, he forgets the tail—before he sought the fan, now he seeks the rhinoceros; it is hard to attend to him, and therefore (Pao Fu) said, 'Better ask someone else.'" Hsueh Tou said, "What a pity to work hard without accomplishing anything."

All these were in the form of remarks: the Ancients saw through this matter, so though each was different, when they spoke forth, they hit the mark a hundred times out of a hundred, always having a way to show forth; each phrase does not lose the bloodline. People these days, when they are questioned, just make up theoretical judgments and comparisons; that is why I want people to chew on this twenty-four hours a day, making every drop of water a drop of ice, seeking the experience of enlightenment. See how Hsueh Tou versified it on one thread, saying,

#### VERSE

*The rhinoceros-horn fan has long been in use,*

In summer, cool; in winter, warm. Everyone has it; why don't they know? Who has never used it?

*But when asked, actually nobody knows.*

They know, but they don't understand. Better not fool people. And you shouldn't suspect anyone else.

*The boundless pure breeze and the horn on the head,  
Where are they? If you do not understand in yourself,  
where will you understand? In the heavens and on earth.  
The horn has regrown. What is it? He rouses waves with-  
out wind.*

*Just like the clouds and rain, when gone, are difficult to pursue.*

Heavens! Heavens! Still this is losing one's money and incurring punishment anyway.

Hsueh Tou also said, "If you want the pure breeze to return, and the horn to regrow,<sup>1</sup> I ask you Ch'an followers to each turn a word.<sup>2</sup> I ask you, since the fan is broken, return the rhinoceros to me."<sup>3</sup>

At that time a monk came forth and said, "Everyone, go meditate in the hall!"<sup>4</sup>

Hsueh Tou said, "I cast my hook fishing for whales, but caught a frog." Then he got down from the seat.<sup>5</sup>

#### NOTES (cont'd.)

1. Everyone has this fan: throughout the twenty-four hours of the day, they completely obtain its power; why do they not know at all when they are asked? Can you speak?
2. He has already spoken thrice. Yen Kuan is still alive.
3. There is yet one or a half. Bah! It would be better to overthrow his meditation seat.
4. He draws the bow after the thief has gone. He neither gets to the village nor reaches the shop.
5. He brought this about. He draws his bow after the thief is gone.

#### COMMENTARY

"The rhinoceros-horn fan has long been in use, / But when asked, actually nobody knows." Everyone has this fan, and throughout the twenty-four hours of the day is in complete possession of its power—why is it that when asked, no one knows where it's gone? The attendant, T'ou Tzu, all the way down to Pao Fu—neither do any of them know. But tell me, does Hsueh Tou know?

Have you not seen how when Wu Cho called on Manjusri, as they were drinking tea, Manjusri held up a crystal bowl and asked, "Do they have this in the South?" Wu Cho said, "No." Manjusri said, "What do they usually use to drink tea?" Wu Cho was speechless. If you know what this public case is about, then you will know that the rhinoceros-horn fan has a boundless pure breeze; you will also see the horn towering on the rhino's head.

The four old fellows speaking as they did were like the morning clouds and evening rain; once gone, they are difficult to pursue. Hsueh Tou also said, "If you want the pure breeze to return and the horn to regrow, I ask you Ch'an followers to each utter a turning word: I ask you, since the fan is broken, return the rhinoceros to me." At that moment a Ch'an follower came forth and said, "Everyone, go meditate in the hall!" This monk has usurped the Master's sceptre of authority. He certainly could speak, but he was only able to say eighty percent. If you want a hundred percent, then throw the meditation seat over for him. Now, you tell me, did this monk understand the rhinoceros or not? If he did not understand, yet he knew how to speak in this way; if he did understand, why did Hsueh Tou not approve of him? Why did he say, "I cast a hook fishing for whales, but only caught a frog."

Tell me, ultimately how is it? Everyone, there's nothing to worry about; try to hold it up to view.

# The World Honored One Ascends the Seat

## POINTER

One who can discern the tune as soon as the lute strings move is hard to find even in a thousand years. By releasing a hawk upon seeing a rabbit, at once the swiftest is caught. As for summing up all spoken words into a single phrase, gathering the universe into a single atom, dying the same and being born the same, piercing and penetrating in all ways, is there anyone who can stand witness? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

One day the World Honored One ascended his seat.<sup>1</sup> Manjusri struck the gavel and said, "Clearly behold the Dharma of the King of Dharma; the Dharma of the King of Dharma is thus."<sup>2</sup> The World Honored One then got down off the seat.<sup>3</sup>

## NOTES

1. Guest and host both lose. This is not the only instance of indulgence.
2. One son has intimately understood.
3. Sad man, do not speak to sad people; if you speak to sad people, you'll sadden them to death. Beating the drum, playing the lute, two masters in harmony.

## COMMENTARY

Before the World Honored One had raised the flower,<sup>a</sup> already there was this scene. From the beginning at the Deer Park<sup>b</sup> to



the end at the Hiranyavati River,<sup>c</sup> how many times did he use the jewel sword of the Diamond King? At that time, if among the crowd there had been someone with the spirit of a patch-robed monk who could transcend, he would have been able to avoid the final messy scene of raising the flower. While the World Honored One paused, he was confronted by Manjusri, and immediately got down from his seat. At that time, there was still this scene; Shakyamuni barred his door, Vimalakirti shut his mouth—both resemble this, and thus have already explained it. It is like the story of Su Tsung asking National Teacher Chung about making a seamless memorial tower,<sup>d</sup> and also like the story of the outsider asking Buddha, "I do not ask about the spoken or the unspoken."<sup>e</sup> Observe the behavior of those transcendent people; when did they ever enter a ghost cave for their subsistence? Some say that the meaning lies in the silence; some say it lies in the pause, that speech illumines what cannot be said, and speechlessness illumines what can be said—as Yung Chia said, "Speaking when silent, silent when speaking." But if you only understand in this way, then past, present, and future, for sixty aeons, you will still never have seen it even in dreams. If you can immediately and directly attain fulfillment, then you will no longer see that there is anything ordinary or holy—this Dharma is equanimous, it has no high or low. Every day you will walk hand in hand with all the Buddhas.

Finally, observe how Hsueh Tou naturally sees and produces it in verse:

#### VERSE

*Among the assembled multitude of sages, if an adept had known,*

Better not slander old Shakyamuni. Leave it up to Lin Chi or Te Shan. Among a thousand or ten thousand, it's hard to find one or a half.

*The command of the King of Dharma wouldn't have been like this.*

Those who run after him are as plentiful as hemp and millet. Three heads, two faces. Clearly. How many could there be who could reach here?

*In the assembly, if there had been a "saindhava man,"*

It's hard to find a clever man in there. If Manjusri isn't an adept, you sure aren't.

*What need for Manjusri to strike the gavel?*

What is the harm of going ahead and striking the gavel once? The second and third strokes are totally unnecessary. How will you speak a phrase appropriate to the situation? angerous!

#### COMMENTARY

"Among the assembled multitude of sages, if an adept had known." The great mass of eighty thousand on Vulture Peak all were ranked among the sages: Manjusri, Samantabhadra, and so on, including Maitreya; master and companions were assembled together—they had to be the skilled among the skillful, the outstanding among the outstanding, before they would know what he was getting at. What Hsueh Tou intends to say is that among the multitude of sages, there was not a single man who knew what is: if there had been an adept, then he would have known what was not so. Why? Manjusri struck the gavel and said, "Clearly behold the Dharma of the King of Dharma; the Dharma of the King of Dharma is thus." Hsueh Tou said, "The command of the King of Dharma is not like this." Why so? At the time, if there had been in the assembly a fellow with an eye on his forehead and a talisman at his side, he would have seen all the way through before the World Honored One had even ascended the seat; then what further need would there be for Manjusri to strike the gavel?

The Nirvana Scripture says, "*Saindhava* is one name for four actual things: one is salt, the second is water, the third is a bowl, and the fourth is a horse. There was a wise attendant who well understood the four meanings: if the king wanted to wash, and needed *saindhava*, the attendant would then bring him water; when he asked for it when eating, then he served him salt; when the meal was done, he offered him a bowl to drink hot water; and when he wanted to go out, he presented a horse. He acted according to the king's intention without error; clearly one must be a clever fellow to be able to do this."

When a monk asked Hsiang Yen, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?" Hsiang Yen said, "Come over here." The monk went; Hsiang Yen said, "You make a total fool of others." He also asked Chao Chou, "What is the king asking for *saindhava*?" Chou got off his meditation seat, bent over and folded his hands. At this time if there had been a "*saindhava* man" who could penetrate before the World Honored One had even ascended his seat, then he would have attained somewhat. The World Honored One yet ascended his seat, and then immediately got down; already he hadn't got to the point—how was it worth Manjusri's still striking the gavel? He unavoidably made the World Honored One's sermon seem foolish. But tell me, where was it that he made a fool of him?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This refers to the oft-repeated story of the Buddha holding a flower up before a huge assembly, whereat Mahakasyapa smiled, the only one to understand the Buddha's message. In Ch'an tradition this represents the first "heart to heart transmission" of Ch'an in India.
- b. Shakyamuni Buddha gave his first sermon at the Deer Park in Benares, to five ascetics with whom he had formerly associated.
- c. Shakyamuni Buddha died by the Hiranyavati River.
- d. See case 18.
- e. See case 65.

# Ta Kuang Does a Dance

## CASE

A monk asked Ta Kuang, "Ch'ang Ch'ing said, 'Joyful praise on the occasion of a meal'—what was the essence of his meaning?"<sup>1a</sup>

Ta Kuang did a dance.<sup>2</sup> The monk bowed.<sup>3</sup> Kuang said, "What have you seen, that you bow?"<sup>4</sup> The monk did a dance.<sup>5</sup> Kuang said, "You wild fox spirit!"<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. The light shines again. This lacquer tub! It is unavoidable to doubt; without asking, you won't know.
2. Do not deceive people completely. He acts in the same way as (Chin Niu did) before.
3. He too acts this way; he's right, but I fear he's misunderstood.
4. He still should press him; it's necessary to be discriminating.
5. He draws a cat according to a model. After all he misunderstood. He's a fellow playing with a shadow.
6. This kindness is hard to requite. The Thirty-three Patriarchs only transmitted this.

## COMMENTARY

The Twenty-eight Patriarchs in India and the Six Patriarchs in China only transmitted this little bit; but do you people know what it comes down to? If you know, you can avoid this error; if you do not know, as before you will only be wild fox spirits.<sup>b</sup>

Some say (Ta Kuang) wrenched around the other's nostrils to deceive the man; but if it were actually so, what principle would that amount to? Ta Kuang was well able to help others; in his phrases there is a road along which to get oneself out. In general, a teacher of the school must pull out the nails, draw

out the pegs, remove the sticking points and untie the bonds for people; only then can he be called "a good friend."<sup>c</sup>

Ta Kuang did a dance, the monk bowed; in the end, the monk also did a dance, and Ta Kuang said, "You wild fox spirit!" This was not turning the monk over; after all, if you do not know the real point, and just do a dance, going on one after the other like this, when will you ever find rest? Ta Kuang said, "Wild fox spirit"—these words cut off Chin Niu, and are undeniably outstanding. That is why it is said, "He studies the living word, not the dead word." Hsueh Tou just likes his saying "You wild fox spirit!" That is the basis on which he produces his verse. But tell me, is this "wild fox spirit" the same as or different from "Tsang's head is white; Hai's head is black,"<sup>d</sup> "This lacquer bucket!"<sup>e</sup> or "Good monk!"? Just tell me, are these the same or different? Do you know? You meet him everywhere.

#### VERSE

*The first arrow was still light, but the second arrow went deep:*

A hundred shots, a hundred hits. Where can you go to escape?

*Who says yellow leaves are yellow gold?*

Yet they'll put an end to crying; but even if you can fool a child, it's of no use.

*If the waves of Ts'ao Ch'i were alike,*

What limit is there to people playing with mud balls? He draws a cat according to a model. He lets out a single road.

*Innumerable ordinary people would get bogged down.*

We meet a living man! He has entangled every patchrobed monk in the world, and makes them unable to get a hold; he entangles you too, and makes you unable to appear.

#### COMMENTARY

"The first arrow was still light, but the second arrow went deep." Ta Kuang's dance was the first arrow. He also said,

"This wild fox spirit!" This was the second arrow. This has been the tooth and nail since time immemorial.

"Who says yellow leaves are yellow gold?" Yang Shan said to his community, "You people should each turn back your light and reflect; do not memorize my words. Since beginningless aeons you have turned your backs on the light and plunged into darkness; the roots of your false conceptions are deep, and after all are hard to pull out all at once. That is why I temporarily set up expedient methods to take away your coarse discriminating consciousness; this is like using yellow leaves to stop a little child's crying." It is like exchanging sweet fruit for bitter gourd. The Ancients provisionally established expedient methods to help people; when their crying has stopped, yellow leaves are not gold.<sup>f</sup> When the World Honored One explained timely doctrines throughout his lifetime, these too were just talks to put an end to crying. "This wild fox!"—he just wanted to transmute the other's active discriminating consciousness; within (the process) there are provisional and real, there are also illumination and function; only thus can you see the grasp of the patchrobed monk there. If you can understand, you'll be like a tiger with folded wings.

"If the waves of Ts'ao Ch'i were alike."<sup>g</sup> If suddenly all the students in all quarters did a dance like this, and only acted like this, then innumerable ordinary people would get bogged down; how could they be saved?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. See case 74; reference to that case is made several times.
- b. As a term of scorn, "wild fox spirit" connotes fakery or show; "wild fox Ch'an" is an expression used to refer to empty pretense.
- c. *Shan chih shih*, a translation of Sanskrit *kalyanamitra*, which means a good or virtuous friend, refers to a spiritual guide, teacher, benefactor.
- d. See case 73.
- e. A lacquer bucket, or lacquer tub, means an ignoramus. The blackness of lacquer symbolizes ignorance, lack of enlightenment.
- f. That is, just as yellow leaves are used to placate a crying child by pretending they are gold trinkets, various teachings and tech-

niques are used to put an end to people's confusion and misery, though ultimately, as Te Shan said, there is nothing to give to people, no true doctrine.

- g. By Hsueh Tou's time, all the living streams of Ch'an were descended from the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng, who is also referred to by the name Ts'ao Ch'i after his dwelling place. Ts'ao Ch'i was a river; the temple where Hui Neng taught was built near its source in Shao Chou in the far south of China.

# The Surangama Scripture's Not Seeing

## POINTER

The one phrase before sound is not transmitted by a thousand sages; the single thread before our eyes is forever without a gap. Pure and naked, bare and clean, the White Ox on Open Ground.<sup>a</sup> Eyes alert, ears alert, the golden-haired lion—leaving this aside for a moment, tell me, what is the White Ox on Open Ground?

## CASE

The *Surangama* scripture says, “When I do not see, why do you not see my not seeing?<sup>1</sup> If you see my not seeing, naturally that is not the characteristic of not seeing.<sup>2</sup> If you don’t see my not seeing,<sup>3</sup> it is naturally not a thing<sup>4</sup>—how could it not be you?”<sup>5</sup>

## NOTES

1. Good news! What is the use of seeing? Old Shakyamuni has broken down quite a bit.
2. Bah! What leisure time is there? You shouldn’t tell me to have two heads and three faces.
3. Where are you going? It’s like driving a nail into an iron spike. Bah!
4. He pushes down the ox’s head to make it eat grass. What further verbal sound and form is there to speak of?
5. To say you or me is totally beside the point. Striking, I say, “Do you see old Shakyamuni?”



## COMMENTARY

In the *Surangama* scripture it says, "When I don't see, why don't you see my not seeing? If you see my not seeing, naturally that is not the characteristic of not seeing. If you don't see my not seeing, it is naturally not a thing; how could it not be you?" Hsueh Tou here does not quote the entire passage of the scripture; if it is quoted in full, then it can be seen. The scripture says,<sup>b</sup> "If seeing were a thing, then you could also see my sight. If seeing alike were called seeing my (seeing), when I don't see, why don't you see my not seeing? If you see my not seeing, naturally that is not the characteristic of not seeing. If you don't see my not seeing, naturally it is not a thing; how could it not be you?" The words are many, and I won't record them. Ananda intended to say, "The lamps and pillars in the world all can be given names; I also want the World Honored One to point out this subtle spiritual fundamental illumination—what can you call it, to let me see the Buddha's intent?" The World Honored One says, "I see the incense stand." Ananda says, "I also see the incense stand; then this is the Buddha's sight." The World Honored One says, "When I see the incense stand, then that can be known; when I do not see the incense stand, then how will you see?" Ananda says, "When I don't see the incense stand, then this is seeing the Buddha." The Buddha says, "If I say I don't see, this is my own knowledge; when you say you don't see, this is your own knowledge—where another doesn't see, how can you know?" The ancients said that when you get here, you can only know for yourself; you can't explain to others. Just as the World Honored One said, "When I do not see, why don't you see my not seeing? If you see my not seeing, naturally that is not the characteristic of not seeing. If you do not see my not seeing, naturally it is not a thing; how could it not be you?" If you say you acknowledge sight as an existent thing, you are not yet able to wipe away the traces. "When I don't see" is like the antelope with his horns hung up—all echo of sound, traces of tracks, all breath is utterly gone; where will you turn to search for him? The sense of the scripture is total indulgence in the beginning and total restraint in the end. Hsueh Tou goes beyond the eye of the scriptural teachings to versify: he neither

eulogizes things, nor seeing or not seeing; he just eulogizes seeing Buddha.

#### VERSE

*"The Whole Elephant" or "The Whole Ox"—as blinding cataracts, they're no different.*

Half-blind man! Half open, half closed. What are you doing, clinging to fences and groping along walls? One cut, two pieces.

*Adepts of all time have together been naming and describing.*

Twenty-eight (Patriarchs) in India, six in China, all the old teachers in the world, numerous as hemp and millet seeds—yet you have still left yourself out.

*If you want to see the yellow-faced old fellow right now,*

Bah! The old barbarian! Blind fellow! He's right at your feet.

*Each atom of every land lies halfway there.*

Where you stand you've already missed him. What more would you have me say? Will you ever see him, even in a dream?

#### COMMENTARY

"The Whole Elephant or the Whole Ox—as blinding cataracts, they're no different." A group of blind people groping over an elephant each speaks of a different aspect; this comes from the *Nirvana* scripture. A monk asked Yang Shan, "Master, when you saw someone come and ask about Ch'an or ask about the Way, you then drew a circle, and wrote the word 'ox' inside it; where does the meaning of this lie?" Yang Shan said, "This too is an idle matter: if you immediately can understand, it doesn't come from outside; if you cannot understand immediately, you certainly don't recognize it. Now I ask you, what have the aged adepts in various places pointed out in your body as your Buddha-nature? Do you consider it that which speaks, or is it that which is silent? Is it not that which neither speaks nor is silent? Or do you consider everything to be it, or do you con-

sider that everything is not it? If you acknowledge that which speaks as it, you are like the blind man who has grabbed on to the elephant's tail. If you acknowledge that which is silent as it, you are like the blind man grabbing the elephant's ear. If you acknowledge that which neither speaks nor is silent as it, you are like the blind man grabbing the elephant's trunk. If you say everything is it, you are like the blind man grabbing the elephant's four legs. If you say none are it, you abandon the original elephant and fall into the view of emptiness. According to what these blind men perceive, they just attribute different names and descriptions to the elephant. If you want to do right, just avoid groping over the elephant: do not say perceptive awareness is it, yet do not say that is not it."

The Sixth Patriarch said, "Enlightenment basically has no tree; the clear mirror also has no stand. Fundamentally there is not a single thing; how is it possible to be defiled by any dust?" He also said, "The Way fundamentally has no shape or form; wisdom itself is the Way. To attain this understanding is called true transcendent wisdom." One with clear eyes sees the elephant and apprehends its entire body; the seeing of Buddha nature is also like this.

The "whole ox" appears in the *Chuang-tzu*: Pao Ting, in cutting up oxen, never saw the whole ox; he followed the internal patterns to cut them apart; letting his cleaver glide freely, he did not need to add any further effort. In the time it takes to raise your eyes, head and horn, hoof and flesh were separated of their own accord. He did so for nineteen years, and his cleaver was still as sharp as though it had newly come from the whetstone. This is called the "whole ox." Although he was so excellent, Hsueh Tou says that even if you can be like this, the whole elephant and the whole ox are no different from blinding cataracts in the eyes. "Adepts of all time together name and describe." Even adepts still grope inside without finding. From Kasyapa on down through the patriarchs and masters of India and China, the old teachers all over the world are just naming and describing.

Hsueh Tou directly says, "If you want to see the old yellow-face<sup>c</sup> right now, every atom of dust in every land lies halfway there." Usually we say that each atom is a Buddha-land, each leaf is a Shakyamuni. Even when all the atomic particles in the cosmos can be seen in one atom, you're still only halfway

there; there is still another half of the way yonder. But tell me, where is he? Old Shakyamuni didn't even know himself; how would you have me explain?

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. The open ground symbolizes the stage of Buddhahood; the white ox symbolizes the Dharmakaya, the body of reality, the ultimate and universal body of all Buddhas. In the *Saddharmapundarika* scripture, the white ox symbolizes the unique vehicle of Buddhahood. See also the appendix on Tung Shan's three falls in volume two.
- b. This passage occurs in the second volume of the *Surangama* scripture; we have translated according to the Sung dynasty commentary of Tzu Jui. This scripture, whose title means "Heroic Going," describes many psychological states and pitfalls of meditation; it was one of the favorite scriptures of Ch'an students, and numerous quotations from it are to be found in the sayings of Ch'an masters.
- c. "Yellow-face" refers to Shakyamuni Buddha, who as a Buddha represents all Buddhas and Buddhahood in general; the Buddha was said to have golden skin, hence the epithet "yellow face."

# Ch'ang Ch'ing's Three Poisons

## POINTER

Where there is Buddha, do not stay; if you keep staying there, your head will sprout horns. Where there is no Buddha, quickly run past; if you don't run past, weeds will grow ten feet high.

Even if you are pure and naked, bare and clean, without mental activity outside of things, without things outside of mental activity, you still have not escaped standing by a stump waiting for a rabbit.<sup>a</sup>

But tell me, without being like any of this, how would you act? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

Ch'ang Ch'ing once said, "Rather say that saints have the three poisons,<sup>1</sup> but do not say that the Tathagata has two kinds of speech.<sup>2</sup> I do not say the Tathagata is speechless,<sup>3</sup> just that he doesn't have two kinds of speech."<sup>4</sup>

Pao Fu said, "What is Tathagata speech?"<sup>5</sup>

Ch'ing said, "How could a deaf man hear?"<sup>6</sup>

Pao Fu said, "I knew you were talking on the secondary level."<sup>7</sup>

Ch'ing said, "What is Tathagata speech?"<sup>8</sup>

Pao Fu said, "Go drink tea."<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

1. Scorched grain doesn't sprout.
2. He has already slandered old Shakyamuni.
3. He is still making a fool of himself; already he has seven openings and eight holes.
4. Useless maundering. What third or fourth kind will you talk about?

5. He gives a good thrust; what will you say?
6. He addresses a plea to the sky. It's burst forth in profusion.
7. How can you fool a clear-eyed man? He snaps his nostrils around.  
Why stop at only the second level?
8. A mistake; yet he's getting somewhere.
9. Understood. But do you comprehend? Stumbled past.

### COMMENTARY

Ch'ang Ch'ing and Pao Fu, while in the community of Hsueh Feng, were always reminding and awakening each other, engaging in discussion. One day casually talking like this, (Ch'ang Ch'ing) said, "Rather say that saints have the three poisons than say that the Tathagata has two kinds of speech." The Sanskrit word for saint, *arhat*, means killer of thieves;<sup>b</sup> by their virtue and accomplishment they illustrate their name; they cut off the nine times nine, or eighty-one kinds of passion, all their leaks are already dried up,<sup>c</sup> and their pure conduct is already established—this is the state of sainthood, where there is nothing more to learn. The three poisons are greed, hatred, and folly, the fundamental passions. If they have themselves completely cut off the eighty-one kinds (of passion), how much more so the three poisons! Ch'ang Ch'ing said, "Rather say that saints have the three poisons, but don't say that the Tathagata has two kinds of speech." His general idea was that he wanted to show that the Tathagata does not say anything untrue. In the Lotus of Truth scripture it says, "Only this one thing is true;<sup>d</sup> any second besides is not real." It also says, "There is only one vehicle of truth; there is no second or third." The World Honored One, in over three hundred assemblies, observed potentiality to set down his teachings, giving medicine in accordance with the disease: in ten thousand kinds and a thousand varieties of explanations of the Dharma, ultimately there are no two kinds of speech. His idea having gotten this far, how can you people see? The Buddha widely taught the Dharma with One Voice; this I don't deny—but Ch'ang Ch'ing actually has never seen the Tathagata's speech even in a dream. Why? It's just like a man talking about food—after all that can't satisfy his hunger. Pao Fu saw him talking about the doctrine on level ground, so he asked, "What

is Tathagata speech?" Ch'ing said, "How can a deaf man hear it?" This fellow (Pao Fu) knew that (Ch'ang Ch'ing) had been making his living in a ghost cave for some time; Pao Fu said, "I knew you were speaking on the secondary level." And after all (Ch'ang Ch'ing) lived up to these words; he asked back, "Elder brother, what is Tathagata speech?" Fu said, "Go drink tea." (Ch'ang Ch'ing) had his spear snatched away by someone else; Ch'ang Ch'ing, supposedly so great, lost his money and incurred punishment.

Now I ask everyone, how many (kinds of) Tathagata speech are there? You should know that only when you can see in this way, then you will see the defeat of these two fellows. If you examine thoroughly, everyone should be beaten. I'll let out a pathway, to let others comprehend. Some say that Pao Fu spoke correctly, and that Ch'ang Ch'ing spoke incorrectly; they just follow words to produce interpretations, so they say there is gain and loss. They are far from knowing that the Ancients were like stone struck sparks, like flashing lightning. People nowadays do not go to the Ancients' turning point to look; they just go running to the phrases and say, "Ch'ang Ch'ing didn't immediately act; therefore he fell into the secondary level. Pao Fu's saying 'Go drink tea' is the primary level." If you only look at it in this way, even by the time Maitreya Buddha comes down to be born here, you still won't see the Ancients' meaning. If you are an adept, you will never entertain such a view; leaping out of this nest of cliché, you'll have your own road upward.

If you say, "What is wrong with 'How could a deaf man hear'?? What is right about 'Go drink tea'?" Then you are even further from it. For this reason it is said, "He studies the living phrase, he doesn't study the dead phrase." This story is the same as the story of "It is all over the body; it is all through the body"<sup>e</sup>—there is nowhere you can judge and compare right or wrong. It is necessary for you to be clean and naked right where you stand; only then will you see where the Ancients met. My late teacher Wu Tsu said, "It is like coming to grips on the front line." It requires a discerning eye and a familiar hand. In this public case, if you see it with the true eye, where there is neither gain nor loss, it distinguishes gain and loss; where there is no near or far, it distinguishes near and far. Ch'ang Ch'ing still should have bowed to Pao Fu to be proper. Why?

Because (Pao Fu) used this little bit of skill well, like thunder rolling or a comet flying. But Pao Fu couldn't help but produce tooth upon tooth, nail upon nail.

# VERSE

*Primary, secondary:*

In my royal storehouse, there are no such things. The standard for past and present. What are you doing, following the false and pursuing the bad?

*A reclining dragon does not look to still water—*

Only one on the same road would know.

*Where he is not, there is the moon; the waves settle:*

Over the four seas the solitary boat goes by itself. It is useless to trouble to figure it out. What bowl are you looking for?

*Where he is, waves arise without wind.*

He threatens people ferociously; do you feel your hair standing on end in a chill? Striking, I say, "He's come!"

*O Ch'an traveller Leng! Ch'an traveller Leng!*

He takes in a thief, who ransacks his house. Do not appear in a bustling marketplace. He lost his money and incurred punishment.

*In the third month, at the Gate of Yü, you've got a failing mark.*

Not one in ten thousand can withdraw himself and defer to others. He can only suck in his breath and swallow his voice.

# COMMENTARY

"Primary, secondary." If people only theoretically understand primary and secondary, this indeed is making a living in dead water. This active skill, if you only understand it in terms of first or second, you will still be unable to get hold of it. Hsueh Tou says, "A reclining dragon does not look to still water." In dead water, how can there be a dragon hidden? If it is "primary



and secondary," this indeed is making a livelihood in dead stagnant water. There must be huge swells wide and vast, white waves flooding the sky; only there can a dragon be concealed. It is just like was said before; "A limpid pond does not admit the blue dragon's coils." Have you not heard it said, "Stagnant water does not contain a dragon." And it is said, "A reclining dragon is always wary of the clarity of the blue pond." That is why (Hsueh Tou) says that where there is no dragon, there is the moon, the waves settle—the wind is calm, the waves grow still. Where there is a dragon, waves rise without wind; much like Pao Fu's saying "Go drink tea"—this indeed is rousing waves without wind. Hsueh Tou at this point cleans up emotional interpretations for you, and has completed the verse. He has extra rhymes, so he makes the pattern complete; as before he sets a single eye on the content, and again is undeniably outstanding. He says, "O Ch'an traveller Leng! Ch'an traveller Leng!" In the third month at the Gate of Yü, you get a failing mark."<sup>8</sup> Although Ch'ang Ch'ing was a dragon who had passed through the Dragon Gate, yet he got a tap right on the head from Pao Fu.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. A fool once saw a rabbit run into a stump and die; he waited by the stump, hoping it would "catch" another rabbit for him. See case 10.
- b. *Arhat* also means "worthy"; that is, worthy of offerings.
- c. "Leaks" are passions, attachments, defilements; the flow of energy into habitual patterns of clinging, into emotional involvement with the world, draining people of their will and making them slaves of passion. The four knowledges of sainthood—*arhatship*—are that one's leaks are dried up—that is, one is free from affectation and affliction, that pure conduct has been established, that one has done what was to be done, and that one is freed from further existence in the profane state.
- d. The main idea of this scripture is that all sentient beings will eventually realize Buddhahood, perfect enlightenment; "this one thing" is the knowledge and vision of Buddhas—the one vehicle is the vehicle of Buddhahood, within which the vehicles of discipleship, leading to sainthood, and of self-enlightenment through

understanding the conditions of confusion and suffering, are shown to be provisional teachings designed for beings of lesser capacity and inspiration who are temporarily unable to bear the burdens of bodhisattvahood on the way to the unexcelled perfect enlightenment of all Buddhas.

- e. See case 89.
- f. Ch'ang Ch'ing's personal initiatory name was Hui Leng; it was standard practice to refer to someone by the second syllable of the name.
- g. According to legend, fish who can leap past the Dragon Gate (which is called the Gate of Yü because it was built under the direction of the great king Yü in the latter part of the third millennium B.C. during the time of a great flood in northern China) turn into dragons and soar off into the clouds. In Chinese literary convention this is used to symbolize the civil service examinations; those who pass and are eligible for official posts are likened to the fish who have become dragons. In Ch'an this is used to symbolize the attainment of enlightenment. This first appears in the seventh case, q.v., and recurs several times in this book.

# Chao Chou's Three Turning Words

## CASE

Chao Chou expressed three turning words to his community.<sup>1</sup> ("A gold Buddha does not pass through a furnace; a wood Buddha does not pass through fire; a mud Buddha does not pass through water.")

## NOTES

1. What did he say? The three parts are not the same.

## COMMENTARY

After Chao Chou had spoken these three turning words, in the end he said, "The real Buddha sits within." This phrase is exceedingly indulgent. That man of old set forth a single eye, extended his hand to guide people; briefly making use of these words to convey the message, he wanted to help others. If you one-sidedly bring up the true imperative in its entirety, there would be weeds ten feet deep in front of the teaching hall. Hsueh Tou dislikes the indulgence of that final phrase, so he omits it and just versifies three phrases. If a mud Buddha passes through water it will dissolve; if a gold Buddha passes through a furnace it will melt; if a wood Buddha passes through fire it will burn up. What is difficult to understand about this? Hsueh Tou's hundred examples of eulogizing the Ancients are complicated with judgments and comparisons; only these three verses directly contain the breath of a patchrobed monk. However, these verses are nevertheless difficult to understand. If you can pass through these three verses, I'll allow as you have finished studying.

## VERSE (1)

*A mud Buddha does not pass through water:*

He's soaked it till the nose decomposes. Without wind he raises waves.

*Spiritual Light illumines heaven and earth;*

Seeing a rabbit, he releases a hawk. What has it got to do with others?

*Standing in the snow, if he didn't rest,*

When one person transmits a falsehood, ten thousand people transmit it as truth. He adds error to error. Who has ever seen you?

*Who would not carve an imitation?*

Upon entering a temple, you see its nameplate. Running up and running down twenty-four hours a day—what is it? You are it.

## COMMENTARY

"A mud Buddha does not pass through water: Spiritual Light illumines heaven and earth." This one phrase clearly completes the verse: but tell me, why does he mention Shen Kuang ("Spiritual Light")? When the Second Patriarch was first born, a spiritual light illumined the room, extending into the sky. Also one night a spirit appeared and said to the Second Patriarch, "Why remain here long? The time for you to attain the Way has arrived: you should go South." Because of his association with spirits, the Second Patriarch was eventually named Shen Kuang (which means "Spiritual Light"). He lived for a long time in the Yi-Lo area (Loyang), and widely studied many books. He always lamented, "The teachings of Confucius and Lao Tzu only transmit customary norms. Recently I have heard that the great teacher Bodhidharma is dwelling at Shao Lin." So he went there, visiting and knocking day and night; but Bodhidharma sat still, and gave no instruction. Kuang thought to himself, "When people of ancient times sought the Way, they broke their bones and took out the marrow, shed their blood to appease hunger, spread their hair to cover mud, threw themselves off cliffs to feed tigers. Even of old they were like this; what about me?"

That year on the night of the ninth of December there was a great snow. The Second Patriarch stood by the wall; by dawn the snow had piled up past his knees. Bodhidharma took pity on him and said, "You, standing in the snow there; what do you seek?" The Second Patriarch sighed sadly and said, "I only beg your compassion, to open up the gate of ambrosia, and save all creatures." Bodhidharma said, "The wondrous path of all the Buddhas requires zealous work over vast aeons, practicing that which is difficult to practice, enduring the unendurable; with little virtue and petty knowledge, a shallow heart and arrogant mind, how can you hope to seek the true vehicle? There is no way." The Second Patriarch, hearing this admonition, was even more earnest towards the Path; he secretly took a sharp knife and cut off his own left forearm, and placed it before Bodhidharma. Bodhidharma knew he was a vessel of Dharma, so he asked him, "You stand in the snow and cut off your arm; what for?" The Second Patriarch said, "My mind is not yet at ease. Please, Master, ease my mind." Bodhidharma said, "Bring forth your mind, and I will ease it for you." The Second Patriarch said, "When I search for my mind, ultimately I can't find it." Bodhidharma said, "I have put your mind at ease for you." Afterwards Bodhidharma changed (Shen Kuang's) name to Hui K'e. Later (Hui K'e) taught the Third Patriarch, Great Master Seng Ts'an.

So Hsueh Tou says, "Standing in the snow, if he didn't rest, who would not carve an imitation?" Slavishly fawning deceitful people would all imitate him, at once becoming mere contrived false imitations: these are the obsequious phoney followers. Hsueh Tou is eulogizing "A mud Buddha does not pass through water"—why then does he bring up this story? He had reached the absence of anything at all in his mind; clean and naked, only thus could he versify like this.

Wu Tsu always used to have people look at these three verses. Have you not seen how Master Shou Ch'u of Tung Shan had a verse which he showed his community, saying,

*Atop Mount Wu T'ai, clouds are steaming rice;  
In front of the Ancient Buddha Hall, a dog is pissing  
skyward.  
Frying cakes atop the flagpole,  
Three monkeys pitch pennies in the night.*

And Master Tu Shun said,

*When oxen in Huai province eat grain,  
The bellies of horses in Yi province are distended;  
Looking for a doctor all over the world  
To cauterize a pig's left arm.*

And Mahasattva Fu said,

*Empty handed, holding a hoe,  
Walking, riding a water buffalo,  
A man is crossing over a bridge;  
The bridge, not the water, flows.*

It is also said,

*If the capacity of a stone man were like you,  
He too could sing folk songs;  
If you were like a stone man,  
You too could join in the opera.*

If you can understand these words, then you will understand that verse of Hsueh Tou's.

## VERSE (2)

*A gold Buddha does not pass through a furnace;  
He burns off the eyebrows. "In the heavens and on earth, I  
alone am the Honored One."*

*Someone comes calling on Tzu Hu;*

*He goes this way too? I only fear he'll lose his life.*

*On the sign, several words—*

*An illiterate would have no way of understanding even if  
it were about a cat. No patchrobed monk in the world can  
get his teeth in.*

*Where is there no pure wind?*

*You go this way too? Above the head it is vast and bound-  
less; below the feet, vast and boundless. I also say, "It's  
arrived."*

## COMMENTARY

"A gold Buddha does not pass through a furnace; / A man comes calling on Tzu Hu." This one phrase has also completed

the verse. Why does he bring up "someone calling on Tzu Hu"? Only with the forge and bellows of a Master is it possible. Master Tzu Hu set up a sign on his outside gate; on the sign were words saying, "Tzu Hu has a dog: above, he takes people's heads; in the middle, he takes people's loins; below, he takes people's legs. If you stop to talk to him, you'll lose your body and life." Whenever he saw a newcomer, he would immediately shout and say, "Watch out for the dog!" As soon as the monk turned his head, Tzu Hu would immediately return to the abbot's room. But tell me, why could he not bite Chao Chou? Tzu Hu also once late at night shouted in the lavatory, "Catch the thief! Catch the thief!" In the dark he ran into a monk; he grabbed him by the chest and held him, saying, "Caught him! Caught him!" The monk said, "Master, it's not me." Hu said, "It is, but you just won't own up to it." If you can understand this story, then you may chew everyone to death; everywhere the pure wind will be chill and severe. If not, you will certainly not be able to do anything about "the several words on the sign." If you want to see him, just pass through completely and then you will see what the verse is saying.

### VERSE (3)

*A wood Buddha does not pass through fire;  
Burned up! Only I can know.*

*I always think of the Oven Breaker—*

Going east, going west, what is wrong? A leper drags a companion along.

*The staff suddenly strikes,*

It is in my hands. I still don't need it. Who doesn't have it in his hands?

*And then one realizes he'd turned away from his self.*

Just like you. If you can't find it out, what use is it? Alas! Alas! After thirty years you'll finally get it. It is better to be sunk forever than to see the liberation of the saints. If you can seize it here, you'll still not avoid turning away. How to be able not to turn away? The staff is still in another's hands.

## COMMENTARY

"A wood Buddha does not pass through fire; / I always think of the Oven Breaker." This one phrase also has completed the verse. Hsueh Tou, because of this "wood Buddha does not pass through fire," always thinks of the Oven Breaker. The "Oven Breaker Monk" of Mount Sung was not known by any surname; his speech and behavior were unfathomable. He dwelt in seclusion on Mount Sung. One day, leading a group of followers, he went among the mountain aborigines: they had a shrine which was most sacred; in its hall was placed only an oven. People from far and near sacrificed to it unceasingly; they had immolated very many living creatures. The Master entered the shrine and tapped the oven three times with his staff. He said, "What humbug! You were originally made of brick and mud compounded; where does the spirit come from, whence does the sanctity originate, that you burn living creatures to death like this?" And again he hit it three times. The oven then toppled over, broke and collapsed of itself. Momentarily there was a man in a blue robe and tall hat suddenly standing in front of the Master; bowing, he said, "I am the god of the oven; for a long time I have been subject to retribution for actions, but today, hearing the Master explain the truth of non-origination, I am already freed from this place, and living in heaven. I have come especially to offer thanks." The Master said, "It is your fundamentally inherent nature, not my forced saying so." The god again bowed, and disappeared. An attendant said, "I and others have been around the Master for a long time, but have never received instruction. What shortcut did the oven god find, that he was immediately born in heaven?" The Master said, "I just said to him, 'You were originally made of brick and mud put together; where does the spirit come from, whence does the sanctity emerge?'" The attendant had no reply. The Master said, "Do you understand?" The monk said, "I do not understand." The Master said, "Bow!" The monk bowed; the Master said, "Broken! Collapsed!" The attendant was suddenly greatly enlightened.

Later a certain monk reported this to National Teacher Hui An. The Teacher sighed in admiration and said, "This lad has comprehended thoroughly things and self as one suchness."



The oven god understood this principle, therefore he was thus: that monk was a body composed of five heaps; (the Master) also said, "Broken! Collapsed!" Both opened to enlightenment, but tell me, are the four elements and five heaps the same as or different from brick and tiles, mud and earth? Since it is so, why does Hsueh Tou say, "The staff suddenly strikes; (the oven god) then realizes he had turned away from his self"? Why does one become turned away? It is just a matter of not yet having found the staff.

And tell me, as Hsueh Tou eulogizes "a wood Buddha does not pass through fire," why does he cite the public case of the oven breaking and collapsing? I will explain it directly for you; his intention is just to cut off feelings and ideas of gain and loss; once cleaned and naked, you will naturally see his kindness.

# The Diamond Cutter Scripture's Scornful Revilement

## POINTER

If you take up one and let two go, you are not yet an adept; even to understand three corners when one is raised still goes against the fundamental essence. Even if you get heaven and earth to change instantly, without rejoinder from the four quarters, thunder rolling and lightning flying, clouds moving and rain rushing, overturning lakes and toppling cliffs, like a pitcher pouring, like a bowl emptying, you have still not raised up a half. Is there anyone who can turn the polar star, who can shift the axis of the earth? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

The Diamond Cutter scripture says, "If one is scornfully reviled by others,<sup>1</sup> this person has done wicked acts in previous ages<sup>2</sup> which should bring him down into evil ways,<sup>3</sup> but because of the scorn and vilification by others in the present age,<sup>4</sup> the wicked action of former ages<sup>5</sup> is thereby extinguished."<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES

1. It lets out a pathway. And what is wrong with that?
2. Assloads, horseloads.
3. He's already fallen.
4. Paying off the roots has effects that extend to the branches. He can only accept it with forbearance.
5. Where can you seek for it? Planting grain will not produce beans.
6. This is adding another layer of frost upon snow. It's like boiling water melting ice.

## COMMENTARY

In the Diamond Cutter scripture<sup>a</sup> it says, "If one is scorned and vilified by other people, the fact is that this person has done evil actions in former ages which should bring him down into evil ways; but because of the scornful revilement of people in this age, the wicked action of former ages is thereby extinguished." According to the ordinary way of interpretation, this is the constant theme throughout the scripture. Hsueh Tou brings it up and versifies this meaning; he wants to break up the scholastic schools' livelihood in the ghost caves. Prince Chao Ming<sup>b</sup> singled out this part and considered it able to clear away obstruction by former deeds.

The general idea of the scripture talks about the efficacy of this scripture: someone like this in former times created hellish deeds, but because of the strength of its good power, he has not yet suffered. Because of scorn and vilification by people in the present age, the wicked action of former ages is thereby extinguished. This scripture therefore can extinguish the wicked deeds of innumerable aeons, changing the grave to become light, changing the light to being inconsequential, and furthermore bringing the attainment of enlightenment, the fruit of Buddhahood.

According to the scholastic schools, turning<sup>c</sup> this twenty-odd page scripture is itself called "upholding the scripture," but what connection is there? Some say that the scripture itself has spiritual power. If so, take a volume and lay it in an uncluttered place; see if there is any effect or not. Fa Yen said, "Realizing Buddhahood is called 'upholding this scripture.'" In the scripture it says, "All the Buddhas and the teaching of complete perfect awakening of all the Buddhas, all comes forth from this scripture." But tell me, what do you call "this scripture"? Is it not that with yellow scrolls on red rollers? Don't mistakenly stick by the zero point of the scale.

The Diamond is likened to the body of truth: because it is hard and solid, things cannot break it; because of its sharp cutting function, it can break anything. Apply it to a mountain, and the mountain crumbles; apply it to the sea, and the sea dries up. The name is expressed in metaphor, and so is its activity.

This wisdom is of three kinds: the first is the wisdom of the character of reality, the second is observant illumination wisdom, and the third is verbal wisdom. The wisdom of the character of reality is true knowledge: it is the one great matter where each of you stands, shining across past and present, far beyond knowledge and opinion; it is that which is clean and naked, bare and untrammelled. Observant illumination wisdom is the real world; it is that which emits light and moves the earth twenty-four hours a day, hearing sound and seeing form. Verbal wisdom is the language which can express it; that is, the present speaker and hearer. But tell me, is this wisdom or is it not wisdom? An Ancient said, "Everyone has a volume of scripture." It has also been said, "My hand does not hold a scripture scroll, but I am always turning such a scripture."

If you depend on this scripture's spiritual efficacy, why stop at just making the serious trifling, and making the trifling totally inconsequential? Even if you could match the ability of the sages, that would still not be anything special.

Have you not seen how Layman P'ang, listening to an exposition of the Diamond Cutter scripture, asked the lecturer, "A layman dares to have a small question; is that all right?" The lecturer said, "If you have a doubt, please ask." The layman said, "'There is no sign of self, no sign of others'—since there is no sign of self or others, who would you have lecture, who would you have listen?" The lecturer had no reply; instead he said, "I just interpret the meaning according to the letter; I do not know the meaning of this." The layman then said in verse,

*No self and no others; how could there be near or  
far?*

*I urge you to stop going through lectures;  
How could that be compared to seeking the real  
directly?*

*The nature of adamant wisdom is devoid of a  
single particle of dust;*

*'I have heard' through 'I faithfully accept'  
Are all just artificial names.*

This verse is most excellent; it has clearly explained all at once.

Kuei Feng picked out a four line stanza, saying, "Whatever is seen, all is empty falsehood; if you see that various forms are

not forms, then you see the Tathagata." The meaning of this four line stanza is exactly the same as "Realizing Buddhahood is called 'upholding this scripture.'"

It is also said (in the scripture), "If one sees me by means of form, if he seeks me by means of sound, this person is traversing a false path; he cannot see the Tathagata." This too is a four line stanza; we just take from among them those whose meaning is complete. A monk asked Hui T'ang, "What is the four line stanza?" Hui T'ang said, "Your talk is degenerate, yet you don't even realize it."

Hsueh Tou points out what is in this scripture. If there is someone who can uphold this scripture, then this is the scenery of everyone's original ground, the original face: but if you act according to the Patriarchs' imperative, the scenery of the original ground, the original face, would still be cut into three pieces; the twelve-part teachings of the Buddhas of the three times wouldn't be worth a pinch. At this point, even if you had the ten thousand varieties of skill, you still couldn't handle them. Nowadays people only revolve scriptures and do not know what the principle is at all. They merely say, "In one day, I have revolved so many." They only recognize the yellow scrolls on red rollers, perusing the lines and counting the ink-marks. They are far from realizing that it all arises from their own original minds, that this is only a bit of a turning point.

Master Ta Chu said, "Pile up several cases of scriptures in an empty room, and see if they emit light." It's just your own mind, inspired in a single moment of thought, that is the virtue. Why? Myriad things all come forth from one's own mind. One moment of thought is aware; once aware, it pervades; having pervaded, it transforms. An Ancient said, "The green bamboos are all true thusness; the lush yellow flowers are all wisdom." If you can see all the way through, then this is true thusness; but if you have not yet seen, tell me, what do you call true thusness? The Flower Garland scripture says, "If a person wants to know all the Buddhas of past, present, and future, he should observe that the nature of the cosmos is all just the fabrication of mind." If you can discern, then in whatever situations or circumstances you meet, you'll be the master and the source. If you cannot yet get it clear, then humbly listen to the verdict: Hsueh Tou puts forth an eye and versifies the main theme, wishing to clarify the scripture's spiritual efficacy.

## VERSE

*The clear jewel is in my palm;*

Above, it goes through the sky; below, it penetrates the Yellow Springs (Hades). What is he saying? Impenetrable on four sides, crystal clear on eight faces.

*Whoever has accomplishment will be rewarded with it.*

Quite clear; it would go along with him. If there were no accomplishment, how would you reward it?

*When neither foreigner nor native comes*

Inside and outside are void of happenings. Still this amounts to something.

*It has utterly no abilities.*

More and more irrelevant. Where would you look for it? Come break the lacquer bucket and I'll meet with you.

*Since it has no abilities,*

Stop, rest, Who is speaking this way?

*The Evil One loses the way.*

Outsiders and the king of demons cannot find any tracks.

*Gautama, Gautama!*

Even the Buddha-eye cannot see in. Bah!

*Do you know me or not?*

Bah!

*(Hsueh Tou also said,) "Completely exposed!"*

Each blow of the staff leaves a welt. It was already so before it was said.

## COMMENTARY

"The clear jewel is in my palm; to whoever has accomplishment, I'll reward it." If there is someone who can uphold this scripture with actual effect, then he is rewarded with the jewel. When he gets this jewel, he will naturally know how to use it: when a foreigner comes, a foreigner is reflected; when a native comes, a native is reflected—myriad forms and appearances, vertically and horizontally, are clearly reflected. This is having actual accomplishment. These two lines have finished versifying the public case.

"When neither foreigner nor native comes, it is utterly without abilities." (Here) Hsueh Tou turns your nose around. When foreigners or natives appear, then he has you reflect them; if neither foreigner nor native comes, then what? When he gets here, even the Buddha's eye cannot see in. But tell me, is this accomplishment, or is it wicked action? Is he a foreigner? Is he a native? He's just like the antelope with his horns hung up: do not say there is any sound or trace of him—there is not even a breath; where could you go to search for him? He has gotten to where there is no road on which to have the gods offer flowers, no gate through which demons and outsiders might secretly spy. That is why the Master of Tung Shan dwelt all his life in the temple, but the earth spirit couldn't find any trace of him. One day someone spilled rice flour in the kitchen; Tung Shan aroused his mind and said, "How can you treat the communal supplies with such contempt?" So the earth spirit finally got to see him; thereupon he bowed.

Hsueh Tou says, "Since there are no abilities;" if you reach the point where there is no ability, you will make even the Evil One, the king of demons, lose the way. The World Honored One regarded all sentient beings as his children: if there is one person who rouses his mind to practice, the palace of the Evil One would tremble and split because of this, and the demons would come to torment and confuse the practitioner. Hsueh Tou says that even if the Evil One comes like this, still one must make him lose his way and have no avenue of approach.

Hsueh Tou goes on to point to himself and say, "Gautama, Gautama! / Do you know me or not?" Do not even speak of demons; even should the Buddha come, would he know me or not? Even old Shakyamuni himself couldn't see him; where will you people search for him? He also said, "Completely exposed." But tell me, is this Hsueh Tou exposing Gautama, or is it Gautama exposing Hsueh Tou? Those who have eyes, try to see for sure.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. This is the (*Prajnaparamita*) *Vajracchedika sutra*. This was one of the most popular scriptures in China, and studied by most Ch'an students. The Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an, Hui Neng, was first

enlightened when he chanced to hear a passage of this scripture being recited in a marketplace where he was selling wood; Hung Jen, the Fifth Patriarch, was said to have used it in his teaching. See also the fourth case, volume one.

- b. Prince Chao Ming was the son of the Emperor Wu of Liang; he was an outstanding scholar, fond of Buddhist studies like his famous father. See the first case, in volume one.
- c. "Turning" or "revolving" means recitation; usually, in the case of long scriptures, it means reciting snatches of the scripture while skipping rapidly through. Mahasattva Fu invented a revolving case for the canon, so that all of the scriptures could be "turned" at once by this device; usually memorized passages of scripture are recited while turning the whole canon.



## T'ien P'ing's Travels on Foot

POINTER<sup>a</sup>

Collecting the causes, producing the result, completing the beginning, completing the end. Face to face, there is nothing hidden, but fundamentally I have never explained. If there is suddenly someone who comes forth and says, "All summer we've been asking for instruction; why have you never explained?"—Wait till you've awakened, then I'll tell you.

Tell me, do you think that this is avoidance of direct confrontation, or do you think it has some other merit? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

When the Master of T'ien P'ing was travelling on foot, he called on Hsi Yuan. He always would say, "Do not say you understand the Buddhist Teaching; I cannot find a single man who can quote a saying."<sup>1</sup>

One day Hsi Yuan saw him from a distance and called him by name: "Ts'ung Yi!"<sup>2</sup>

P'ing raised his head:<sup>3</sup> Hsi Yuan said, "Wrong!"<sup>4</sup> P'ing went two or three steps;<sup>5</sup> Hsi Yuan again said, "Wrong!"<sup>6</sup> P'ing approached;<sup>7</sup> Hsi Huan said, "These two wrongs just now: were they my wrongs or your wrongs?"<sup>8</sup>

P'ing said, "My wrongs."<sup>9</sup>

Hsi Yuan said, "Wrong!"<sup>10</sup> P'ing gave up.<sup>11</sup> Hsi Yuan said, "Stay here for the summer and wait for me to discuss these two wrongs with you."<sup>12</sup>

But P'ing immediately went away.<sup>13</sup> Later, when he was dwelling in a temple, he said to his community,<sup>14</sup> "When I was first travelling on foot, I was blown by the wind of events to Elder Ssu Ming's place: twice in a row he said 'Wrong!' and tried to keep me there over the summer to wait for him to deal with me. I did not say it was wrong then; when I set out for the South, I already knew that it was wrong."<sup>15</sup>

## NOTES

1. He's let slip quite a bit. This fellow is right, but nevertheless he's like the sacred tortoise dragging his tail.
2. The hook is set.
3. Got him! A double case.
4. Still he must have been tempered in a furnace before being able. He splits his guts and wounds his heart. When the seal of the three essentials is lifted, the red spot is narrow; before any attempt to discuss it, host and guest are distinguished.
5. Already he's fallen halfway behind. This fellow is washing a clod of dirt in the mud.
6. Splits his guts and wounds his heart. Everyone calls this a double case, but they do not know it is like putting water in water, like exchanging gold for gold.
7. As before, he doesn't know where to rest. More and more he gropes without finding.
8. The first arrows were still light; this last arrow goes deep.
9. He mistakes a saddle ridge for his father's lower jaw.<sup>b</sup> As for such patchrobed monks as this one, even if you killed a thousand or ten thousand of them, what crime would it be?
10. He adds frost to snow.
11. He mistakenly goes by the zero point of the scale. After all he doesn't know where to rest. I knew his nostrils were in someone else's hand.
12. Hsi Yuan's spine is usually hard as iron; why did he not immediately drive (T'ien P'ing) away?
13. He still resembles a patchrobed monk; he resembles one, but isn't really.
14. A poor man thinks of his old debts. Still it is necessary to check.
15. What can he do about the two wrongs? A thousand "wrongs," ten thousand "wrongs"; nonetheless it's all irrelevant. All the more he shows his senility and saddens others.

## COMMENTARY

Master Ts'ung Yi of T'ien P'ing, travelling on foot, went to see Hsi Yuan. Ssu Ming of Hsi Yuan had first called on Ta Hsueh, and later succeeded to the former Pao Shou. One day he asked, "How is it after trampling down the Temporary Citadel of

*nirvana!*" Shou said, "A sharp sword does not cut a dead man." Ming said, "Cut!" Shou thereupon hit him. Ssu Ming said "Cut!" ten times, and Shou hit him ten times and said, "What is this fellow's big hurry to take this dead corpse and submit it to another's painful staff?" Finally he shouted and drove Ssu Ming out. At that time there was a monk who asked Pao Shou, "That monk who just asked a question is quite reasonable, Master; deal with him appropriately." Pao Shou hit him too, driving out this monk. But tell me, when Pao Shou also drove out this monk, can you say it was just because he was speaking of right and wrong, or is there another reason? What was his idea? Later they both succeeded to Pao Shou.

Ssu Ming one day went to see Nan Yuan. Yuan asked him, "Where do you come from?" Ming said, "From Hsu Chou." Yuan said, "What did you bring?" Ming said, "I brought a razor from Kiangsi; I offer it to you." Yuan said, "Since you come from Hsu Chou, how is it that you have a razor from Kiangsi?" Ming took Yuan's hand and pinched it once. Yuan said, "Attendant! Take him away!" Ssu Ming gave a whisk of his sleeve and left. Yuan said, "O wow!"

T'ien P'ing had once called on the Master of Chin Shan. Because he had gone to various places and attained this turnip-Ch'an and put it in his belly, everywhere he went he scornfully opened his big mouth and said, "I understand Ch'an, I understand the Way." He always said, "Do not say you understand the Buddhist Teaching; I cannot find even a single man who can quote a saying." His stinking breath affected others, and he only indulged in scorn and contempt.

Before the Buddha had appeared in the world, before the Patriarch had come from the West, before there were questions and answers, before there were public cases, was there any Ch'an Way? The Ancients could not avoid imparting teachings according to potentialities; people later called them "public cases." As the World Honored One raised a flower, Kasyapa smiled; later on, Ananda asked Kasyapa, "The World Honored One handed on his golden-sleeved robe; what special teaching did he transmit to you besides?" Kasyapa said, "Ananda!" Ananda responded; Kasyapa said, "Take down the flagpole in front of the monastery gate." But before the flower was raised, before Ananda had asked, where do you find any public cases? You just accept the winter melon seals of various places, and

once the seal is set, you then immediately say, "I understand the marvel of the Buddhist Teaching! Don't let anyone know!"

T'ien P'ing was just like this: when Hsi Yuan called him to come and then said, "Wrong!" twice in a row, right away he was confused and bewildered, unable to give any explanations; he "neither got to the village nor reached the shop." Some say that to speak of the meaning of the coming from the West is already wrong; they are far from knowing what these two wrongs of Hsi Yuan ultimately come down to. You people tell me, what do they come down to? This is why it is said, "He studies the living word, not the dead word." When T'ien P'ing raised his head, he had already fallen into two and three. Hsi Yuan said, "Wrong." But (T'ien P'ing) did not grasp his straightforward action, but just said, "I have a bellyful of Ch'an," and didn't pay any attention to him, and went two or three steps. Hsi Yuan again said, "Wrong!" But T'ien P'ing was as muddled as before, and approached Hsi Yuan. Yuan said, "The two wrongs just now; were they my wrongs or your wrongs?" T'ien P'ing said, "My wrongs." Fortunately, there is no connection. Already he had fallen into seventh and eighth place. Hsi Yuan said, "Just stay here for the summer and wait for me to discuss these two wrongs with you." T'ien P'ing immediately went away. He seemed to be right, but wasn't really. Then again, I don't say he wasn't right; it's just that he couldn't catch up. Nevertheless, he still had something of the air of a patchrobed monk.

When T'ien P'ing later was dwelling in a temple, he said to his community, "When I was first travelling on foot, I was blown by the wind of events to Master Ssu Ming's place. Twice he said 'Wrong!' and tried to have me pass the summer there to wait for him to deliberate with me. I did not say it was wrong then; when I set out for the South, I already knew that it was wrong." This old fellow has said quite a bit; it's just that he's fallen into seventh and eighth place, shaking his head thinking, out of touch. When people these days hear him saying, "When I set out for the South, I already knew that it was wrong," they immediately go figuring it out and say, "Before even going on foot travels, there is naturally not so much Buddhism or Ch'an; and when you go foot travelling, you are completely fooled by people everywhere. Even before foot travels, you can't call earth sky or call mountains rivers; fortunately there is nothing

to be concerned about at all." If you all entertain such common vulgar views, why not buy a bandanna to wear and pass your time in the boss's house? What is the use? Buddha's teaching is not this principle. If you discuss this matter, how could there be so many complications? If you say, "I understand, others do not understand," carrying a bundle of Ch'an around the country, when you are tried out by clear-eyed people, you won't be able to use it at all. Hsueh Tou versifies in exactly this way:

VERSE

*Followers of the Ch'an house*

The lacquer buckets all have their crimes listed on the same indictment.

*Like to be scornful:*

Still there are some (who are otherwise). Those who scold Buddhas and revile Patriarchs are as plentiful as hemp and millet.

*Having studied till their bellies are full, they cannot put it to use.*

It would be best to have use. A square peg does not fit in a round hole. You are a fellow student of theirs.

*How lamentable, laughable old T'ien P'ing;*

No patchrobed monk in the world can leap out. He doesn't fear that bystanders may frown. Still he's gotten people to foolishly fret.

*After all he says at the outset it was regrettable to go travel on foot.*

He was already wrong before he had gone travelling. Wearing out sandals, what is the use? He blots it out with one brush stroke.

*Wrong, wrong!*

What is this? Hsueh Tou has already wrongly named it.

*Hsi Yuan's pure wind suddenly melts him.*

Where is Hsi Yuan? What is it like? Do not speak only of Hsi Yuan, even the Buddhas of past, present, and future and the old masters everywhere also must fall back three thousand miles. If you can understand here, you may travel freely anywhere.

(Hsueh Tou) also said, "Suppose there is suddenly a patchrobed monk who comes out and says, 'Wrong';<sup>1</sup> how does Hsueh Tou's wrong compare to T'ien P'ing's wrong?"<sup>2</sup>

#### NOTES TO PROSE

1. The crimes are listed on the same indictment. He's still gotten somewhere.
2. Hsi Yuan again appears in the world. He settles the case according to the facts. Totally irrelevant. But tell me, after all, how is it? Striking, I say "Wrong!"

#### COMMENTARY

"Followers of the Ch'an house like to be scornful; having studied till their bellies are full, they can't put it to use." This fellow understood, as far as understanding goes; it's just that he couldn't use it. He always gazed at the cloudy sky and said he understood so much Ch'an; but when he was heated a little in the fireplace, it turned out that he couldn't use it at all. My late Master Wu Tsu said, "There is a kind of person who studies Ch'an like stuffing cakes in a crystal pitcher; it can't be turned over any more, it can't be cleaned out, and if you bump it, it immediately breaks. If you want to be lively and active, just study 'leather bag' Ch'an: even if you smash it down from the highest mountain, it still won't break, it won't burst." An Ancient said, "Even if you can grasp it before it is spoken, this is still remaining in the shell, wandering within limitation; even if you can thoroughly penetrate upon hearing a phrase, you still won't avoid crazy views on the way."

"How lamentable, laughable old T'ien P'ing; after all he says it was regrettable at the outset to go travelling." Hsueh Tou is saying that it's lamentable that he couldn't explain to others; it's laughable that he understood a bellyful of Ch'an but couldn't go on to make even the slightest use of it. "Wrong, wrong!" Some say that T'ien P'ing didn't understand, and thus was wrong; and some say his not speaking was wrong. But what connection is there? They hardly realize that these two "wrong"s are like stone struck sparks, like flashing lightning;

this is where those transcendent people tread, like using a sword to kill people, immediately grabbing people's throats, whereupon their root of life is severed. If you can travel on the sword's edge, then you will be free in all ways. If you can understand these two "wrong"s, then you can thereby see Hsi Yuan's pure wind suddenly melting (T'ien P'ing). When Hsueh Tou had finished quoting this story in the hall, he meant to say "wrong." I ask you, how does this wrong of Hsueh Tou compare to T'ien P'ing's wrong? Study for thirty more years.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. According to the recommendation of Tenkei Denson, this pointer has been exchanged with that of the hundredth case, but either is suitable for both.
- b. A man searching a battlefield for his father's remains finds a saddle ridge and mistakes it for his father's lower jaw.

# Su Tsung's Ten-Body Controller

## POINTER

When a dragon howls, mist arises; when a tiger roars, wind arises. In the fundamental design of appearing in the world, gold and jade<sup>a</sup> play together; in the strategic action of omniscience, arrowpoints meet each other.<sup>b</sup> The whole world is not concealed, far and near are equally revealed, past and present are clearly described.

But tell me, whose realm is this? To test, I cite this to see.

## CASE

Emperor Su Tsung asked National Teacher Chung, "What is the Ten-Body Controller?"<sup>1</sup>

The National Teacher said, "Patron, walk on Vairocana's head."<sup>2</sup>

The emperor said, "I don't understand."<sup>3</sup>

The National Teacher said, "Don't acknowledge your own pure body of reality."<sup>4</sup>

## NOTES

1. An adept ruler, the emperor of Great T'ang; he too should know this. On his head is the rolled lobe hat, on his feet are unworn shoes.
2. He takes his hand and walks together with him on the other side of Mount Sumeru. There is still this.
3. Why don't you understand his words? What a pity! The details are not imparted. The emperor should have immediately shouted then; what further need did he have to understand?
4. Although he makes complications, he still has a way to get himself out. Drunk and doddering, he saddens others to death.



## COMMENTARY

When the Emperor Su Tsung was living in the Eastern Palace (as crown prince) he was already studying under National Teacher Chung. Later, when he succeeded to the throne, he honored him even more earnestly; when (Chung) came and went, (Su Tsung) greeted and saw him off, personally bearing the palanquin.

One day he posed a question to ask the National Teacher, "What is the Ten-Body Controller?" The Teacher said, "Patron, walk on Vairocana's head." The National Teacher's spine was usually as stiff as cast iron; but when he came into the presence of the emperor, it was like soft mud. Although he answered subtly, still he had a good point. He said, "If you want to understand, Patron, you must walk on Vairocana's head before you can understand." The emperor didn't get it; he said, "I don't understand." The National Teacher was subsequently extremely indulgent and entered into the weeds; he further commented on the preceding phrase by saying, "Do not mistakenly acknowledge your own pure body of reality." That refers to what is inherent in everyone, complete and perfect in each and every one. See how (Chung) lets go and gathers in, taking on adversaries from all sides.

Have you not heard it said that one who is good as a teacher sets up the teaching according to potential? He observes the wind to set the sail; if he just stayed in one corner, how could he interchange? Observe the Elder of Huang Po; he was well able to guide people; when he met Lin Chi, in three times he hit him sixty painful blows, and Lin Chi thereupon understood. But when he came to helping Prime Minister P'ei Hsiu, it was complicated in the extreme.<sup>c</sup> Was he not good as a teacher of people? National Teacher Chung skillfully used appropriate methods to teach Emperor Su Tsung; in all it was because he had the skill to take on adversaries from all sides. The "Ten-Body Controller" is the ten kinds of other-experienced body.<sup>d</sup> The three bodies of Reality (*dharmakaya*), Enjoyment (*sambhogakaya*), and Appearance (*nirmanakaya*), are identical to the body of reality. Why? Because the enjoyment and appearance are not the real Buddha, and they are not what expounds the Dharma. When remaining in the body of reality,

then as a single expanse of empty solidity, spiritual brightness quiescently shines.

When the Elder Fu of T'ai Yuan was expounding the *Nirvana* scripture in Kuang Hsiao Temple of Yang Chou, there was a wandering monk—actually it was the cook of Chia Shan—who was staying in the temple, snowed in; he took the opportunity to go listen to the lecture. When the lecture touched on the three bases of Buddha nature<sup>e</sup> and the three qualities of the body of reality,<sup>f</sup> and as Fu spoke profusely of the subtle principle of the body of reality, the cook suddenly broke out laughing. Fu then looked at him. When the lecture was over, he had someone summon the Ch'an man, and asked him, "My simple knowledge is narrow and inferior; I interpret the meanings according to the words. Just now, in the course of the lecture, I saw you break out in a laugh; I must have some shortcoming—please explain it to me."

The cook said, "If you did not ask, I dare not speak. Since you have asked, I cannot but explain. I was actually laughing because you don't know the body of reality." Fu said, "What is wrong with my explanation, such as it was?" The cook said, "Please explain it once more." Fu said, "The principle of the body of reality is like the great void: vertically, it goes through past, present, and future; horizontally it extends throughout the ten directions of the universe; it fills the eight extremities and embraces both positive and negative modes. According to conditions, it tends toward effect; there is nowhere it does not extend." The cook said, "I did not say your explanation is wrong; but you only know that which pertains to the extent of the body of reality; you do not actually know the body of reality." Fu said, "Granting that you are right, you should explain it for me." The cook said, "If you agree, then give up lecturing for ten days, and meditate correctly in a quiet room; collect your mind, gather your thoughts, give up various clings to good and bad all at once, and investigate exhaustively on your own."

Fu did just as he had said, from the first to the fifth watch of the night; when he heard the sounding of the drum, he suddenly attained enlightenment and immediately went to knock on the Ch'an man's door. The cook said, "Who's there?" Fu said, "Me." The cook scolded him, saying "I would have you transmit and maintain the Great Teaching, explaining it in the

Buddha's stead; why are you laying in the street drunk on wine in the middle of the night?" Fu said, "Hitherto in my lectures on the scriptures I have been twisting the nostrils of the father and mother who gave birth to me; from today on, I no longer dare to be like this."

See that outstanding fellow! Did he merely go accept this radiant spirituality and fall in front of asses but behind horses? He had to have broken up his habitual active consciousness, so that there is nothing that can be apprehended; yet he has still only realized one half. An Ancient said, "If you do not give rise to any thought of practice or study, within formless light you'll always be free." Just discern that which is always silent and still; do not acknowledge sound and form; just discern spiritual knowledge, do not acknowledge false imagination. This is why it was said, "Even if an iron wheel is turning on your head, with concentration and wisdom complete and clear, they are never lost."

Bodhidharma asked the Second Patriarch, "What did you cut your arm off for, standing there in the snow?" The Patriarch said, "My mind is not yet at ease; please ease my mind for me, Master." Bodhidharma said, "Bring me your mind and I'll ease it for you." The Patriarch said, "When I seek my mind, after all I can't find it." Bodhidharma said, "I have eased your mind for you." The Second Patriarch suddenly attained enlightenment. But tell me, at just such a moment, where is the body of reality? Ch'ang Sha said,

*Students of the Way do not know reality  
Just because they acknowledge the conscious spirit  
as before;  
It's the root of countless aeons of birth and death,  
Yet fools call it the original man.*

People right now just acknowledge this radiant awareness, and immediately stare and glare, playing with their spirits: but what relevance does this have? As he said, "Do not acknowledge your own pure body of reality," but when it comes to your own body of reality, you have still not even seen it in a dream; how can you yet talk about not acknowledging it? In the doctrinal schools, they consider the pure body of reality to be the ultimate law; why not let people acknowledge it? Haven't you heard it said, "As long as you are acknowledging it, as before it

is after all still not so." Bah! It's best to immediately strike a blow. Whoever can understand the meaning of this will for the first time understand his saying, "Don't acknowledge your own pure body of reality." Hsueh Tou dislikes his indulgent kindness, but nevertheless there are thorns in the soft mud.

Have you not seen how Master Tung Shan had three roads for teaching people? They were called the "Hidden Road," the "Bird's Path," and "Extending the Hands." Beginners in the study of the Way temporarily travelled the three roads. A monk asked the Master, "You always teach students to travel the Bird's Path: what is the Bird's Path like?" Tung Shan said, "You don't meet anyone." The monk asked, "How can I travel it?" Shan said, "There just should not be a single thread under your feet as you go." The monk said, "If I travel the Bird's Path, is this not my Original Face?" Shan said, "Why are you upside down?" The monk said, "How am I upside down?" Shan said, "If you are not upside down, why do you take the servant to be the master?" The monk said, "What is the Original Face?" Shan said, "It does not travel the Bird's Path."

You must see as far as this realm; only then will you have a little realization. Even if you cleaned everything and made yourself cut off your tracks and swallow your voice, still in the school of the patchrobed monks this is still the view of novices and children. You must still turn your heads around to the troubles of the world and fully arouse your great function.

#### VERSE

*"The Teacher of a Nation" is also a forced name;*

What is the necessity? A flower in the sky; the moon in the water. When the wind passes over, the treetops move.

*Nan Yang alone may flaunt his good fame:*

After all he cuts off the essential bridge. Among a thousand or ten thousand, it's hard to find one or a half.

*In Great T'ang he helped a real son of heaven—*

Pitiful. What is the use of teaching him? What is accomplished by teaching a blind patchrobed monk?

*Once he had him tread upon Vairocana's head.*

Why doesn't everybody go like this? They would find heaven and earth. How would you tread?

*Then his iron hammer struck and shattered the golden bones;  
He's happy in everyday life. It's already thus before saying  
so.*

*Between heaven and earth, what more is there?  
Within the fast and boundless four oceans, there are few  
who know. The whole body bears the load. He is scatter-  
ing sand and dirt.*

*The lands and seas of three thousand worlds by night are still  
and silent;*

Set your eyes high. Hold fast to your territory; are you  
waiting to enter a ghost cave?

*I do not know who enters the Blue Dragon's cave.*

Thirty blows of the staff; not one can be omitted. He's  
finished bringing it up, but do you understand? Bah!  
People, your nostrils have been pierced by Hsueh Tou. Do  
not mistakenly acknowledge your own pure body of real-  
ity.

#### COMMENTARY

"The Teacher of a Nation is also a forced name; / Nan Yang alone may flaunt his good fame." This verse is just like a eulogy on a portrait. Haven't you heard it said that the ultimate man has no name? To call him National Teacher is also a case of having forcibly affixed a name. The Way of the National Teacher is incomparable. He was skillfully able to teach others in this way.

Nan Yang alone may be accepted as a Master: "In Great T'ang he helped a true son of heaven, and once had him tread upon Vairocana's head." If you have the eye and brain of a patchrobed monk who possesses the eye, you must walk upon Vairocana's head, and only then will you see this Ten-Body Controller. A Buddha is called the "Controller"; this is one of his ten epithets.<sup>h</sup> One body transforms into ten bodies, ten bodies transform into a hundred bodies, and so on, to a thousand hundred hundred million bodies; in their totality they are just one body. This one verse is easy to explain; the latter versifies that saying, "Do not acknowledge your pure

body of reality," and versifies in such a way that water poured on cannot wet it; it is difficult to explain.

"His iron hammer strikes, smashing the golden bones." This versifies "Do not acknowledge your own pure body of reality." Hsueh Tou praises (Chung) greatly; the golden bones have been smashed by one blow of his mallet. "Between heaven and earth, what more is there?" It is just necessary to be clean and naked, bare and untrammelled, so there is no longer anything to be apprehended; then this is the scenery of the basic ground. It is just like the lands and seas of three thousand worlds still and silent in the night. In a universe of three thousand great world systems, in the midst of the Sea of Fragrant Waters, there are infinite lands; in each land there is an ocean. Just when the night is deep and still, and heaven and earth are at once clear and calm, tell me, what is this? Just don't make an understanding of closing your eyes. If you understand in this way, then you'll fall into the poisonous sea.

"I don't know who enters the Blue Dragon's cave." Stretching out the legs, folding the legs; tell me, who is this? Everybody's nostrils have been pierced by Hsueh Tou all at once.

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. "Gold" means an instrument made of metal; "jade," an instrument of stone: ancient Chinese music began with "gold" and ended with "jade"—hence "gold and jade" refers to "consummation." Also they are used to indicate excellence, so we translate literally.
- b. This refers to two master archers shooting at each other; their skill is equal, so their arrows meet each other midway and stop. This story is originally from the *Lieh-tzu*, a Taoist classic; there is also the famous passage in Shih T'ou's *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i* which says, "Phenomena's existence is like box and cover joining; principles' correspondence is like arrowpoints meeting."
- c. This refers to the *Ch'uan Hsin Fa Yao*, "Essentials of the Method of Transmission of Mind," addresses of Huang Po recorded by P'ei Hsiu. Being for a layman, they are quite different from Huang Po's dealings with monks.
- d. A Buddha is said to have two kinds of real body (*dharmakaya*); that experienced by himself, and that experienced by others. The

former is his own enlightenment, and the latter is his teaching of others, or how others experience the Buddha in their perceptions of his qualities and teachings. According to the *Hua Yen*, or Flower Garland scripture, there are the Buddha of nonattachment, the Buddha of vows, the Buddha of results of action, the Buddha of abiding maintenance, the Buddha of extinction (*nirvana*), the Buddha of the cosmos (the *dharmadhatu*, or ultimate realm), the Buddha of mind, the Buddha of concentration, the Buddha of nature, and the magical Buddha. Vairocana, the Great Illuminator, also called the Great Sun Buddha in Chinese, is the primordial Buddha, representing the body of reality, the basis and totality of all these.

- e. The three bases of Buddha nature are the true basis, the basis of understanding, and the basis of conditions. The true basis is the real nature which underlies Buddhahood, the Buddha nature inherent in everyone; the basis of understanding is wisdom, which realizes this real nature; the basis of conditions is the practices which unfold wisdom and allow one to realize one's Buddha nature.
- f. The three qualities of the body of reality correspond to the three bases of Buddha nature; the quality of the pure body of reality, which corresponds to the true basis, the quality of wisdom, which corresponds to the basis of understanding, and the quality of liberation, which corresponds to the basis of conditions, cultivation of liberating practices.
- g. Even the most ancient texts give an alternative reading which is homonymous; "Nothing private under your feet." For an explanation of the three roads of Tung Shan, see the appropriate appendix.
- h. The ten epithets of a Buddha are, Realized One (Tathagata), Worthy (Arhat), True and Universal Knower, Perfect in Knowledge and Conduct, Blissful One, Understander of the World, Unexcelled Knight, Controller of Humanity, Teacher of Humans and Gods, Enlightened One (Buddha), World Honored One. The translations given here are based on Chinese; the Sanskrit equivalents given in parentheses are those which are frequently used in English books.

# Pa Ling's Blown Hair Sword

## POINTER

All summer I've been verbosely making up complications, and almost entangled and tripped up all the monks in the land. But when the Diamond Sword cuts directly, I first realize my hundred-fold incompetence. But tell me, what is the Diamond Sword like? Open your eyes and I'll reveal the swordpoint for you to see.

## CASE

A monk asked Pa Ling, "What is the Blown Hair Sword?"<sup>1a</sup>  
Pa Ling said, "Each branch of coral supports the moon."<sup>2</sup>

## NOTES

1. Cut! Dangerous!
2. The light engulfs myriad forms, the entire land.

## COMMENTARY

Pa Ling does not move his shield and spear, (but) in the land, how many people's tongues fall to the ground! Yun Men taught people just like this; (Pa Ling) was a true son of Yun Men. And each of (Yun Men's successors) had his strategy of action; that is why (Hsueh Tou) said, "I always admire Shao Yang's newly established devices; all his life he pulled out nails and drew out pegs for people."

This story is just like this; within one phrase there are three phrases naturally inherent—the phrase enclosing heaven and earth, the phrase cutting off all streams, and the phrase following the waves. His reply was undeniably outstanding. Yuan



"the jurist" of Fu Shan said, "For a man who has not yet passed through, studying the meaning is not as good as studying the phrase." At Yun Men's place there were three venerable adepts who replied about the "Blown Hair Sword"; two of them said, "Complete." Only Pa Ling was able to give an answer beyond the word "complete"—this is attaining the phrase.

But tell me, are "complete" and "each branch of coral supports the moon" the same or different? Before, (Hsueh Tou) said, "The three phrases should be distinguished; one arrow flies through space." If you want to understand this story, you must cut off the defilement of feelings and conscious conceptions, and be completely purified; then you will see his saying, "Each branch of coral supports the moon." If you make up any further rationalization, all the more you'll find you're unable to grasp it.

These words are from Ch'an Yueh's poem of remembering a friend:

*Thick as the iron on the Iron Closure Mountains,  
Thin as the dapples on the body of immortal Shuang  
Cheng.*

*Pheonixes and fowl from the looms of Shu always  
make him stumble.*

*Each branch of coral supports the moon;  
Stored away in the house of Wang K'ai, it is hard to  
dig out.*

*Yen Hui, that hungry fellow, laments the sky's  
snow;*

*The ancient cypress brush is so straight, even snow  
can't break it.*

*The snow-clad stone girl's curling peach belt—  
Wearing it, he enters the dragon palace, his steps  
slow.*

*The embroidered screen, the silver ladle; how do  
they differ?*

*The jet black dragon has lost the jewel; do you  
know it or not?*

Pa Ling took one phrase from among these lines to reply to the "Blown Hair Sword"; he is quick. One blows a hair against the edge of a sword to test it; when the hair splits of itself, then it is a sharp sword, and it is called a blown hair sword. Pa Ling just

goes to the point of his question and immediately answers this monk's words. (The monk's) head fell without him even realizing it.

## VERSE

*When it is necessary to even the uneven,*

Tiny as an ant. A powerful man should be like this.

*Even the great adept seems inept.*

He does not stir sound or form. He hides his body but reveals his shadow.

*Sometimes on the finger, sometimes in the palm;*

Look! After all this is not it.

*Leaning against the sky, it shines on the snow—*

Cut! If you stare at it, you'll go blind.

*Even a great smith cannot hone it;*

What do you still want to forget it for? Even Kan Chiang (the legendary smith) couldn't find it.

*Even a master craftsman wouldn't finish polishing it.*

No one could do it. Even if Kan Chiang came forth, he too would fall back.

*It is exceptional, unique:*

Bah! What is so special about it? (Yet) there is something praiseworthy about it.

*Each branch of coral supports the moon.*

In the third watch the moon descends, its image shining in the cold pond. Tell me, where does it go? Drunk and doddering, he saddens others to death.

## COMMENTARY

"When it is necessary to even the uneven, the great adept seems inept." In the past there were wandering warriors; on their way when they saw inequity where the strong oppressed the weak, then they would let fly with their swords to take the heads of the strong. Thus, masters of our school hide a jewel

sword in their eyebrows, and hang a golden mallet in their sleeves, whereby to settle matters of unrest. "The great adept seems inept"—Pa Ling's answer was intended to even what was uneven; because his words were exceeding skillful, instead they turn out to seem inept. What is the reason? Because he does not come attack directly: instead he goes off into a corner and with one stroke secretly beheads the man, yet the man is not aware of it.

"Sometimes on the finger, sometimes in the palm; / Leaning against the sky, it shines on the snow." If you can understand, then it is like the cold and severe spiritual grandeur of a long sword leaning against the sky. An Ancient said, "The mind moon solitary and full, its light engulfs myriad forms. The light is not shining on objects, and the objects are not existing, either. Light and objects both forgotten, then what is this?" This jewel sword is sometimes manifest on the fingertip; suddenly it appears in the palm. In the old days when Librarian Ch'ing had reached this point in his explanation, he raised his hand and said, "Do you see?" Still, it's not necessarily in the hand or the finger: Hsueh Tou just takes a shortcut to let you see the Ancient's meaning. But say, every place cannot but be the Blown Hair Sword; that is why it is said, "When the waves are high at the triple gate, the fish turn to dragons; yet foolish people still drag the evening pond water."

Hsueh Tou says this sword can lean against the sky and shine upon the snow. Usually it is said that the light of the long sword leaning against the sky can shine on the snow: this little bit of function is such that even a great smith cannot hone it, even a master craftsman could never finish polishing it. The master craftsman is such as Nan Chiang (the legendary expert smith): the old tale is self-evident.<sup>b</sup>

When Hsueh Tou has finished the verse, in the end he reveals (the sword), saying, "Exceptional, unique!" It is undeniably exceptional, and has special excellence; it is not like an ordinary sword. But tell me, how is it special? "Each branch of coral supports the moon." This can be said to be prior to light and after annihilation, occupying the heartland alone, without any peer.

Ultimately, how is it? People, your heads are fallen. I have one more little verse:

*Filling a boat with ten thousand bushels, I let you  
haul it away;  
Instead, for one grain of rice, the pot has entrapped  
the snake.  
Having brought up one hundred old public cases,  
How much sand have I thrown in people's eyes to-  
day?*

#### TRANSLATORS' NOTES

- a. As usual, the sword symbolizes wisdom, cutting off confusion and attachment; uncontrived and equanimous, it sees the moon of truth everywhere in everything.
- b. There is a story inserted in the text about Kan Chiang, the legendary smith, and how he made the famous sword No Yeh. All commentaries reject it as a later addition, and it serves no purpose except to identify the name of Kan Chiang.

# Biographical Supplement

The following excerpts from the lives and sayings of the eminent Ch'an masters appearing in the main cases of *The Blue Cliff Record* are taken mostly from the classic Ch'an history *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* (briefly, *Ch'uan Teng Lu*, hereafter referred to as CTL), the "Record of the Transmission of the Lamp (compiled in) the Ching Te era (of the Sung dynasty, 1004)." Containing information on over six hundred Ch'an masters, the CTL usually gives only a few bare biographical facts such as birth, death, and enlightenment stories; most "biography" consists of dialogues, sayings and doings of the teachers. The CTL also includes three chapters of sermons, poems, and short writings. It is a standard Ch'an book and a primary source of many *kung an*.

Some material is also taken from the *Tsu T'ang Chi*, "Collection from the Halls of the Ancestors"; *Wu Teng Hui Yuan*, "Five Lamps Merged in the Source"; and *Ku Tsun Su Yu Lu*, "Records of Sayings of Ancient Venerable Adepts." (These will hereafter be referred to as TTC, WT, and KTS, respectively.)

The TTC antedates the CTL by about fifty years; though a much smaller collection, it contains a number of stories not found in CTL or later collections. The WT, a later and more extensive compilation, draws on five so-called "Lamp" records, including the CTL and its continuation, plus the *Kuang Teng Lu*, *Lien Teng Hui Yao*, and *P'u Teng Lu*. The title "Five Lamps" refers to these five source collections, but is also sometimes taken to refer to the five houses of classical Ch'an. The WT covers a longer period of time than CTL, and often contains more material on individual masters than does the former. Tenkei Denson, one of the main commentators consulted on *The Blue Cliff Record*, usually cites the WT as most detailed and authoritative.

The KTS contains extensive records of sermons and sayings of numerous Ch'an masters, and includes whole volumes which have been published as individual books, such as the *Lin*

*Chi Lu*, "Record of Lin Chi"; and the *Yun Men Kuang Lu*, "Extensive Record of Yun Men."

The order of the biographies is as follows:

Bodhidharma (case 1)  
Pao Chih (cases 1, 67)  
Chao Chou Ts'ung Shen (cases 2, 9, 30)  
Ma Tsu Tao I (case 3)  
Te Shan Hsuan Ch'ien (case 4)  
Kuei Shan Ling Yu (cases 4, 24, 70)  
Hsueh Feng I Ts'un (cases 5, 22, 49, 51)  
Yun Men Wen Yen (cases 6, 8, 14, 15, 22, 27, 34)  
Fa Yen Wen I (case 7)  
Ts'ui Yen Ling Ts'an (case 8)  
Pao Fu Ts'ung Chan (cases 8, 22, 23, 95)  
Ch'ang Ch'ing Hui Leng (cases 8, 22, 23, 95)  
Mu Chou Tao Tsung (case 10)  
Huang Po Hsi Yun (case 11)  
Tung Shan Shou Ch'u (case 12)  
Pa Ling Hao Chien (cases 13, 100)  
Ching Ch'ing (cases 16, 23, 46)  
Hsiang Lin Teng Yuan (case 17)  
Nan Yang Hui Chung (cases 18, 99)  
Lung Ya Chu Tun (case 20)  
Ts'ui Wei Wu Hsueh (case 20)  
Lin Chi I Hsuan (cases 20, 32)  
Chih Men Kuang Tso (cases 21, 90)  
Hsuan Sha Tsung I (cases 22, 88)  
Lotus Flower Peak Hermit (case 25)  
Pai Chang Huai Hai (cases 26, 53, 70, 71, 72, 73)  
Nan Ch'uan P'u Yuan (cases 28, 31)  
Ta Sui Fa Chen (case 29)  
Ma Ku Pao Che (case 31)  
Chang Ching Huai Hui (case 31)  
Tzu Fu Ju Pao (case 33)  
Yang Shan Hui Chi (cases 34, 68)  
Ch'ang Sha Ching Ts'en (case 36)  
P'an Shan Pao Chi (case 37)  
Feng Hsueh Yen Chao (cases 38, 61)  
T'ou Tzu Ta T'ung (cases 41, 79, 80, 91)  
Layman P'ang (case 42)  
Tung Shan Liang Chieh (case 43)

Ho Shan Wu Yin (case 44)  
Ming Chao Te Chien (case 48)  
Yen T'ou Ch'uan Huo (cases 51, 66)  
Tao Wu Yuan Chih (cases 55, 89)  
Shih Shuang Ch'ing Chu (cases 55, 91)  
Ch'in Shan Wen Sui (case 56)  
Mahasattva Fu (case 67)  
Kuei Tsung Chih Ch'ang (case 69)  
Ch'ang Kuan of Wu Feng (cases 70, 71)  
T'an Sheng of Yun Yen (cases 72, 89)  
Chih Tsang of Hsi T'ang (case 73)  
Ting Chou Shih Tsang (case 75)  
T'ien Jan of Tan Hsia (case 76)  
Wei Yen of Yao Shan (case 81)  
Ch'i An of Yen Kuan (case 91)  
Chü Hui of Ta Kuang (case 93)  
Ssu Ming of Hsi Yuan (case 98)

## BODHIDHARMA (4–6 cent. A.D.)

## CASE 1

Bodhidharma was a meditation master from southern India; by the time of *The Blue Cliff Record* his life was veiled in legend. Regarded as the first patriarch of Ch'an in China, most stories of Bodhidharma popular in Ch'an circles are what may be called illustrative history, and are used as teaching materials or guides to contemplation.

Bodhidharma did not associate with kings, did not translate any scriptures or found any temples, and transmitted his bequest to only a few successors. Though his immediate impact on the Buddhist world in China was not very great, he was influential enough locally to be opposed and assassinated. Although there were many meditation teachers in China in Bodhidharma's time, the Buddhist historian Tao Hsuan (7th century A.D.) wrote that Bodhidharma was one of only two teachers who founded continuous transmission lines.

Bodhidharma claimed to be over one hundred and fifty years old when he died. Many stories are told of him: popular legend has it, for example, that his legs fell off after sitting still for nine years; that tea plants first grew from his eyelids, which he cut off in anger after falling asleep during his nine year vigil; and that he introduced *kung-fu* combat techniques to the monks in Shao Lin monastery, to bridle aggressive tendencies and tone otherwise inactive bodies.

Bodhidharma's meeting with Emperor Wu of Liang (r. 502–549) may be part of the legend which grew up around the great teacher. In his youth Wu had mastered many branches of learning, and in 498 was appointed Inspector of Ying Chou (in Hunan); he later took advantage of internal disputes over the authority of the Ch'i dynasty, his employer, to rebel and set up his own kingdom in southern China, called Liang. Turning from warfare to culture, Wu lavishly patronized Confucianism, Taoism, and especially Buddhism, hiding from the responsibilities of sovereignty under the cloak of personal piety. Bodhidharma's blunt deflation of Emperor Wu's pretensions to sanctity and merit is emblematic of the independence of the Ch'an school; because Wu was deceived by outward forms and the concept of holiness, it is said that he did not understand Bodhidharma.



## PAO CHIH (417/421–514)

CASES 1, 67

Pao Chih is recognized as a master of Ch'an; thus he is said to have "seen" Bodhidharma even though the two never met.\* The *Chuan Teng Lu* (27) says,

"Meditation master Pao Chih was a man from Chin Ling (the area of Nanking, the southern capital). His surname was Shu. As a youth he left home and stayed in Tao Lin monastery and cultivated meditative concentration.

"In the beginning of the T'ai Shih era of Sung (465–472), suddenly he no longer dwelt in any fixed abode. He ate and drank without consideration of the hour of the day. His hair was several inches long. He walked barefoot, holding a staff; the staff was armed with dagger, scissors, and a mirror."

Scissors are a conventional Chinese metaphor for appointment and dismissal, promotion and demotion; a mirror is a Buddhist metaphor for clear awareness without biased views—like a mirror that reflects anything that comes before it. The record continues:

"Sometimes he wore one or two feet of silk. Even when not eating for several days, he had no appearance of hunger. Sometimes he might sing songs; his words seemed to be prophecies. The gentry and peasants alike did things for him.

"During the Yung Ming era of Ch'i, the Martial Emperor (r. 483–493) declared that the master was deluding the masses; so he had him captured and bound over to the prison at Chien K'ang.

"When it was morning, the people saw him going into the market place; but when an investigation was made, they found him in prison as before. The prefect of Chien K'ang reported the matter to the Emperor, who invited the master to dwell in the rear hall within the palace.

"The master stayed at the Flower Forest Manor. Suddenly one day he put on three cloth caps: it was not known where he had gotten them. All of a sudden the Prince of Yu Ch'ang, Wen Hui, and the Crown Prince died in succession. The Ch'i dynasty too was now at its last. Due to this, they imprisoned the master.

"When the Exalted Ancestor of Liang (the Emperor Wu of ex. I) assumed that rank, he sent down an imperial rescript stating,

'Master Chih's tracks are within the province of the defilements of the Dusts, but his spirit wanders in hidden tranquillity. Water or fire could not burn or wet him; snakes or tigers could not bother him or cause him fear. To speak of his enlightenment into the Principle, he is higher than a disciple of Buddha; to talk about his mysterious obscurity, he is a lofty one among the Escaped Immortals. How could we regulate him according to the empty forms of the ordinary feelings of uninitiated people? Henceforth do not censor him again.' "

A few cryptic answers to imperial questions are attributed to Pao Chih; they are recorded along with the interpretations of "those who knew" among the court. In this case, his recognition of Bodhidharma as the bodhisattva of compassion is symbolic of the eye of the source.

"In the winter of 514, when his life was about to end, he suddenly ordered the community to move the temple's statue of the Adamantine Being and place it outside. And he said privately to people, 'A bodhisattva is about to leave.'

"Before ten days had passed he died without illness."

\*It was believed that Bodhidharma came to China around 520—after Pao Chih had already died; internal evidence in *Hsu Kao Seng Chuan* suggests that Bodhidharma arrived in China during the latter part of the Liu Sung dynasty (420–479) and was already in northern China well before the end of the fifth century.

## TS'UNG SHEN of Chao Chou (778–897)

CASES 2, 9, 30

Known as Chao Chou, after the place in northern China where he lived and taught for the last forty years of his long life, Ts'ung Shen was one of the most famous and revered Ch'an masters of all time. He claimed to have seen over eighty of Ma Tsu's successors during his long travels on foot; it was Nan Ch'uan to whom he succeeded.

One day Chao Chou asked Nan Ch'uan, "What is the Way?"

Nan Ch'uan said, "The ordinary mind is the Way."

Chou said, "Is it still possible to aim for it?"

Ch'uan said, "If you attempt to turn towards it, then you are turning away from it."

Chou said, "When I make no attempt, how do I know this is the Way?"

Ch'uan said, "The Way is not in the realm of knowing or not knowing; knowing is false consciousness, and not knowing is insensibility. If it is true arrival on the Way where there is no doubt, it is like the great void, like a vacant hall, empty and open; how could one insist on affirming or denying it?"

At these words Chao Chou awakened to the Way. After Nan Ch'uan's death Chao Chou resumed his travels for over twenty years more; only at the age of eighty did he settle down at the Kuan Yin Temple in Chao Chou, where he taught until his death at the age of one hundred and twenty.

Chao Chou was also known for his asceticism: "It was the Master's will to emulate the ancients, and his abbacy was austere. In the monks' hall there were no shelves in front or rear. Vegetarian food was prepared. When one leg of his rope chair broke, he tied on a leftover piece of firewood with rope to support it. There were repeated requests to make a new leg for it, but the Master would not allow it." (This and subsequent citations are taken from the record of Chao Chou's sayings in *Ku Tsun Su Yu Lu* 13–14.)

As abbot, Chao Chou upheld the custom of universal labor in the community of monks, a practice of the Ch'an school initiated by the Fourth Patriarch Tao Hsin and established as a rule by Pai Chang Huai Hai. (In older Chinese Buddhist monastic systems, only novices did manual labor.) One day when he encountered a monk behind the monks' hall, he asked, "Where have all the virtuous ones gone?" That monk said, "They have all gone to work." The master then took a knife out of his sleeve and handed it to the monk, saying, "My tasks as abbot are many; I ask you, Elder, please cut off my head for me." Then he extended his neck; the monk ran off.

Chao Chou's manner of teaching was called "Lip Ch'an," and it was said that light issued from his lips when he spoke. Many sayings of his are recorded, and his repeated appearance in *The Blue Cliff Record* is evidence of their currency. In the closing decades of the ninth century Chao Chou, Hsueh Feng, and Yun Chu (Tao Ying, Tung Shan's great disciple) were the most eminent Ch'an masters in China, but Chao Chou used to say, "Even if you come from Hsueh Feng or Yun Chu, you are still board-carrying fellows." Chao Chou's teaching style was

lofty indeed, and he produced thirteen enlightened successors, but there were few who could match, let alone surpass him, so his transmission line died out after a few generations.

A monk asked, "In the aeon of emptiness, is there still someone cultivating practice?" The Master said, "What do you call the aeon of emptiness?" The monk said, "This is where not a single thing exists." The Master said, "Only this can be called real cultivation."

A monk asked, "The Buddha Dharma is remote; how should I concentrate?" The Master said, "Observe how the Former Han and Latter Han dynasties held the whole empire; yet when the end came, they hadn't a farthing."

## MA TSU TAO I (709–788)

### CASE 3

(Ma Tsu, "Ancestor Ma," also called Great Master Ma, was one of the most illustrious Ch'an masters of all time, the teacher of one hundred and thirty-nine enlightened successors. His teacher was Huai Jang of Nan Yueh, one of the foremost heirs of the Sixth Patriarch Hui Neng. The following is the account of Ma Tsu's meeting with Huai Jang told in the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu*.)

During the K'ai Yuan era (713–741)\* an ascetic named Tao I was dwelling in the Ch'uan Fa Temple; all day he sat meditating. Huai Jang knew that he was a vessel of Dharma, and went to question him; "Great Worthy, what are you aiming at by sitting meditation?" Ma replied, "I aim to become a Buddha." Jang then took a tile and began to rub it on a rock in front of the hermitage; Ma asked him what he was doing rubbing the tile. Jang said, "I am polishing it to make a mirror." Ma said, "How can you make a mirror by polishing a tile?" Jang said, "Granted that rubbing a tile will not make a mirror, how can sitting meditation make a Buddha?" Ma asked, "Then what would be right?" Jang said, "It is like the case of an ox pulling a cart: if the cart does not go, would it be right to hit the cart, or would it be right to hit the ox?" Ma didn't reply.

Jang went on to say, "Do you think you are practicing sitting meditation, or do you think you are practicing sitting Buddhahood? If you are practicing sitting meditation, meditation is

not sitting or lying. If you are practicing sitting Buddhahood, 'Buddha' is not a fixed form. In the midst of transitory things, one should neither grasp nor reject. If you keep the Buddha seated, this is murdering the Buddha; if you cling to the form of sitting, this is not attaining its inner principle."

Ma heard this teaching as if he was drinking ambrosia. He bowed and asked, "How shall I concentrate so as to merge with formless absorption?" Jang said, "Your study of the teaching of the mind ground is like planting seeds; my expounding the essence of reality may be likened to the moisture from the sky. Circumstances are meet for you, so you shall see the Way."

Ma also asked, "If the Way is not color or form, how can I see it?" Jang said, "The reality eye of the mind ground can see the Way. Formless absorption is also like this." Ma asked, "Is there becoming and decay, or not?" Jang said, "If one sees the Way as becoming and decaying, compounding and scattering, that is not really seeing the Way. Listen to my verse:

*Mind ground contains various seeds;  
When there is moisture, all of them sprout.  
The flower of absorption has no form;  
What decays and what becomes?*

Ma heard this and his understanding was opened up. His heart and mind were transcendent. He served his master for ten years, day by day going deeper into the inner sanctum.

\*This meeting probably took place in the mid 730's. Huai Jang had six adept pupils, but he said it was Ma Tsu who realized his "heart."

## HSUAN CH'IEN of Te Shan (781-867)

### CASE 4

(Among Te Shan's nine successors were Yen T'ou Ch'uan Huo and Hsueh Feng I Tsun; he was the ancestor of both the Yun Men and Fa Yen sects of Ch'an. *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 15 gives the following account of him:)

Ch'an master Hsuan Ch'ien of Te Shan in Liang Chou was a man of Chien Nan; his surname was Chou. In his youth he left home, and when he came of age he was fully ordained as a monk. He made a thorough study of the collection of regula-

tions, and penetrated the essential import of the various scriptures expounding nature and its phenomenal expressions. He frequently lectured on the Diamond Wisdom Scripture; his contemporaries called him Diamond Chou.

Later he inquired into the Ch'an sect, whereat he said to his fellow students, "A single hair embraces the sea, yet the sea's nature is not diminished; a minute mustard seed falls upon a sword blade—the sharpness of the sword does not move. Whether there is something to learn or nothing more to learn, only I know that." Then he went to Ch'an master Hsin of Lung T'an. . . .

(After the events narrated in case 4, he dwelt in obscurity for some thirty years in Hunan. In 845, when the emperor Wu Tsung of T'ang tried to do away with Buddhism, Te Shan escaped to a stone grotto on a mountain.)

In the beginning of the Ta Chung era (847–860), Hsueh Yen Wang, the governor of Wu Ling (in Hunan), restored the monastery on Te Shan and called it the Meditation Abode of Ancient Worthies. He was going to look for a man of knowledge to dwell there, when he heard of the master's practice of the Way. Though he repeatedly invited him, the master did not come down from the mountain. Yen Wang then fabricated a ruse, sending a runner to falsely accuse the master of having violated the laws regarding tea and salt. Having taken the master into his domain, he looked up to him with reverence and insisted that he dwell there, and reveal the way of the sect.

In the hall, the master said, "There is nothing in the self, so do not seek falsely; what is attained by false seeking is not real attainment. You just have nothing in your mind, and no mind in things; then you will be empty and spiritual, tranquil and sublime. Any talk of beginning or end would all be self-deception. The slightest entanglement of thought is the foundation of the three mires (hell, animality, hungry ghosthood); a momentarily aroused feeling is a hindrance for ten thousand aeons. The name 'sage' and the label 'ordinary man' are merely empty sounds; exceptional form and mean appearance are both illusions. If you want to seek them, how can you avoid trouble? Even if you despise them, they still become a great source of anxiety. In the end there is no benefit."

Hsueh Feng asked, "In the immemorial custom of the sect, what doctrine is used to teach people?" The master said, "Our

sect has no words; in reality there is no doctrine to be given to mankind."

Yen T'ou heard of this and said, "The old man of Mount Te has a spine as strong as iron; it cannot be broken. Even so, when it comes to the way of expounding the teaching, he still lacks something."

Before his death he said to his disciples, "Grasping emptiness and pursuing echoes wearies your mind and spirit. When awakened from a dream, you realize it was false; after all, what matter is there?" When he finished speaking, he died sitting at rest.

(Te Shan is perhaps most famous for his use of the staff to strike students.)

## LING YU of Kuei Shan (771–854)

CASES 4, 24, 70

(Kuei Shan was the foremost successor of Pai Chang Huai Hai; the whisk which he showed to Te Shan in case 4 was given to him by Pai Chang as a symbol of the transmission. Perhaps the most famous teacher of his time in southern China, Kuei Shan's community numbered fifteen hundred persons, and he produced forty-three enlightened disciples. Among them, the best known were Hsiang Yen Chih Hsien and Yang Shan Hui Chi. Very little is known of Hsiang Yen's successors, but Yang Shan's teaching line remained active for three or four more generations; hence it came to be called the Kuei-Yang Sect, the earliest of the so-called 'Five Houses' of classical Ch'an. The following sermon of Kuei Shan is taken from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 9:)

The mind of a man of the Way is straightforward, without falsehood; there is no turning away nor turning towards, no deceitful false mind. At all times his seeing and hearing are normal; there are no further details or subtleties beyond this. He does not close his eyes or block his ears; it is enough that feelings do not attach to things.

Since time immemorial all the sages have only spoken of the faults of impurity; if there is no such perverted consciousness, opinion and thought habits, then it is like an autumn pond, limpid and clean. Pure and clear, without contrivance, quies-

cent and still, without hindrance; such is called a man of the Way. He is also called an unconcerned man.

(Kuei Shan also wrote a short book called the *Ching Ts'e*, or 'admonishing stick,' in which he points out the degeneracy of Buddhists in his time, and speaks of the true aim of leaving home. This book gained wide circulation in China, and was the first sectarian Ch'an work to be published in Japan, in the year 1198; it is still current in Rinzai Zen circles.)

## I TS'UN of Hsueh Feng (822–908)

CASES 5, 22, 49, 51

Hsueh Feng first wanted to abandon home at the age of nine, but he was prevented from doing so by his parents. At the age of twelve, he went with his father to Yu Chien temple in Fu T'ien (in Foochow): there he saw the preceptual master Ch'ing Hsuan; he said, "This is my teacher," and remained at that temple to serve Ch'ing Hsuan. At age seventeen, he had his head shaved and changed his name to I Ts'un.

When Hsueh Feng was twenty-four, Buddhism was suppressed by the command of the Emperor. In Confucian dress, Hsueh Feng called on the Ch'an teacher Ling Hsun, spiritual grandson of Ma Tsu. The following year, when the suppression had been lifted, Hsueh Feng returned to Ling Hsun as a disciple. Later, when he himself began to teach on Hsueh Feng (one of the names of the mountain where he lived, after which he is usually called, according to Ch'an custom), he modeled the organization of his community after that of Ling Hsun.

At twenty-eight, Hsueh Feng was officially ordained at Pao Ch'a temple in Yu Chou. Two years later his teacher Ling Hsun died; after two more years had passed, at the age of thirty-two Hsueh Feng resumed his travels. He was with Yen T'ou in the community of Huan Chung (780–862, a successor of Pai Chang) at Mt. Ta Tzu in Hang Chou, where they met Ch'in Shan Wen Sui, an outstanding student of Huan Chung. The three of them left Ta Tzu and travelled together to visit other enlightened teachers.

Once in the course of their journey, Ch'in Shan stopped to wash his feet in a stream, when he saw a vegetable leaf floating by. He rejoiced and said, "There must be a man of the Way in



these mountains; let us follow the stream and seek him out." Hsueh Feng said, "Your eye of wisdom is cloudy; later on, how will you judge others? His carelessness about material blessings is such as this; what is he doing, dwelling in the mountains?"

Eventually, as the commentary states, Hsueh Feng went to T'ou Tzu three times and nine times to Tung Shan. The master Ta T'ung of Mt. T'ou Tzu (819–915) was a successor in the fourth generation of the Shih T'ou line. Tung Shan Liang Chieh, patriarch of the Ts'ao-Tung sect, a later branch of the Shih T'ou (or Ch'ing Yuan) line, was one of the most famous masters of the time; Ch'in Shan eventually remained and succeeded to the teaching of Tung Shan, whereas Hsueh Feng and Yen T'ou succeeded to Te Shan.

Hsueh Feng was already forty years old when he met Te Shan, who was then over eighty. Although he stayed there for several years and is reckoned as a successor to Te Shan, in reality it was by Yen T'ou's exhortation that he was thoroughly liberated. Later he became a great teacher, a classic illustration of the Ch'an proverb that "a superior vessel takes a long time to complete."

After his enlightenment, at the age of forty-five Hsueh Feng parted company with Yen T'ou and went back to Min (Foochow): two years later he returned to Mt. Fu Jung ('Lotus Mountain', where Ling Hsun had taught) and dwelt at ease there in a stone grotto. Several followers who had sought him out, especially one Hsing Shih Shih Po, who had been a fellow student of his long before under Ling Hsun, urged him to "appear in the world" and teach. Finally, at the age of forty-nine, he went to Hsiang Ku Shan, "Elephant Bone Mountain," where two donors vied to provide for him. Because the mountaintop was always covered with snow, it was called Hsueh Feng, "Snowy Peak"; and at the age of fifty Hsueh Feng went to live there and spent the next several years with his followers building a place to live and work.

Within ten years, the size of his community had reached fifteen hundred people; so rapidly did his following increase in the early years that there was not enough room or ample provisions for them all. Under Hsueh Feng's guidance, the community was exemplary for its industry and austerity. The renown of Hsueh Feng spread all over China, and in 882 he was given

an honorific purple vestment by the Emperor I Tsung, along with the title Chen Chiao Ta Shih, "Truly Enlightened Great Teacher." By the time of his death at the age of eighty-seven, he had fifty-six enlightened disciples teaching in various places; among them, several who figure in *The Blue Cliff Record* were Hsuan Sha, E Hu, Ch'ang Ch'ing, Ching Ch'ing, Yun Men, Sui Yen, and Pao Fu. Hsueh Feng's teaching line flourished exceedingly through the Fa Yen and Yun Men sects, and lasted about three hundred years in China.

## WEN YEN of Yun Men (?-949)

CASES 6, 8, 14, 15, 22, 27, 34

(Successor to Hsueh Feng, Yun Men taught in Kuangtung, southern China; he produced over sixty enlightened disciples, and was known as the founder of the Yun Men school of Ch'an, which lasted into the thirteenth century, and whose masters were responsible for the preservation of a great deal of Ch'an literature. Noted for his wondrous and often abstruse sayings, Yun Men forbade his disciples to record what he said; one of his attendants stealthily wrote down his sayings on a paper robe, preserving in this way an incredibly rich record of Yun Men's words. The practice of reciting and investigating sayings of earlier Ch'an masters seems to have been growing over a long period of time, but Yun Men was one of the first classical masters to make extensive use of the words of Ch'an ancients in guiding his own disciples. He is said to have originated the form of *tai-yu*, or "substitute sayings," in which he answers a question posed by himself, in behalf of his audience, or else supplies an answer to a question or saying of an earlier master, substituting for a speechless monk in a story; he also originated *pieh-yu*, or "alternative saying," a reply or remark given as an alternate to another in a story, or an alternate reply to one of his self-posed self-answered questions. Other members of Hsueh Feng's congregation were known to have discussed ancient and contemporary Ch'an sayings and doings extensively; the Lin Chi school of Ch'an became well known for its use of *k'an-hua ch'an*, or "meditation contemplating sayings," during the Sung dynasty, but the overt recommendation of this practice is in early evidence in Yun Men's sayings. Remember

also that Hsueh Tou, who collected the sayings and wrote the poems which are the kernel of *The Blue Cliff Record* was a master of the Yun Men school. The following excerpt from one of Yun Men's speeches recorded in *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 19 illustrates his approach to this technique:)

O brethren! You have all called on teachers in various places to settle life and death. Where you went, did not the venerable adepts abiding there utter some compassionate words of help to you? Are there still any phrases you did not penetrate? Come forth and cite them and let's see. This old fellow will haggle with you all. . . .

Ordinary thieving cowards slurp up the spittle of others, memorizing a bunch of miscellaneous trash: wherever they go they run off at the mouth; with asses' lips and horses' chops they boast, 'I know how to pose ten or five pivotal questions.' Even if you go on like this morning to night until the end of time, will you after all have ever seen anything, even in dreams? What use has this in imparting strength to others? Whenever anyone stakes the patchrobed monks to a meal, people like this also say, 'I have food to eat.' How are they even worth talking to? On another day, before the King of Death, he will not accept your verbal explanations.

O brethren, if you have attained, you may spend your days following the crowd in another house; but if you have not attained, just do not pass the time taking it easy. You must be most thoroughgoing.

The Ancients had a lot of problems to help you. These are such as Hsueh Feng's saying, "The whole earth is you." Chia Shan said, "Pick me out in the hundred grasses; recognize the emperor in a bustling market place." Lo P'u said, "As soon as a mote of dust arises, the entire earth is contained therein; on the tip of a hair, the whole body of the Lion is all there." You take hold, and contemplate them over and over again; over long days and many years, you will naturally find a way of entry. In this task, no one can substitute for you; it rests with each individual, without exception.

(The following examples are taken from the *Yun Men Kuang Lu*, to illustrate something of Yun Men's commentary style:)

Quoting Chia Shan's saying, "Find me in the hundred grasses," the master joined his palms and said, "How are you? How are you?" Then he pointed at a pillar with his staff and said, "Chia Shan has turned into a pillar—look! Look!"

Quoting Hsueh Feng's saying, "The Buddhas of past, present, and future turn the Great Wheel of Dharma upon flames of fire," the master said, "The flames of fire expound the Dharma; the Buddhas of past, present, and future stand there and listen."

(The 'three phrases' of Yun Men is a descriptive term first used by Yun Men's successor Te Shan Yuan Mi; the following verses by Yuan Wu describing the three phrases are taken from the *Jen T'ien Yen Mu*.)

*Fundamental reality, fundamental emptiness;*

*One form, one flavor—it is not that a subtle*

*entity does not exist.*

*It is not a matter for hesitating over; clear and lucid,*

*This contains the whole world.*

*It is fundamentally not a matter of interpretation*

*or understanding;*

*When you sum it all up, it's not worth a single letter.*

*When myriad activities abruptly cease,*

*That is cutting off the myriad streams.*

*When you allow the presence of another,*

*Follow the sprouts to descry the ground,*

*Understand the person by means of his words;*

*This is going along with the ripples, following the waves.*

## FA YEN WEN I (885–958)

### CASE 7

Revered as the founder of the Fa Yen sect of Ch'an, he was a successor of Lo Han Kuei Ch'en.\* Kuei Ch'en's teacher had been Hsuan Sha, and the compiler of the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* refers to Fa Yen as a reviver of the Hsuan Sha sect.

Fa Yen had his head shaved at the age of seven, and subsequently studied both Buddhist and Confucian teachings. Later he gave up these pursuits and headed for southern China to seek sudden enlightenment. First he went to the congregation at Ch'ang Ch'ing in Fu Chou, under the master Hui Leng.

It is said that he was highly esteemed there in spite of the fact that his clinging mind was not yet at rest.

Resuming his travels with several companions, at one point Fa Yen was stopped in his tracks by weather conditions and put up at the Ti Ts'ang temple, where the master Kuei Ch'en was abiding at the time. Kuei Ch'en asked him, "Where are you going?" He replied, "I am going to continue wandering around on foot." Ch'en asked, "What is the purpose of your travel?" He replied, "I do not know." Kuei Ch'en said, "Not knowing is closest to it."

According to the *Ch'uan Teng Lu*, Fa Yen was enlightened at these words, and remained at Ti Ts'ang along with three companions, seeking absolute certainty. The record in the *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* states that they went on to discuss the *Chao Lun*, a fourth century Chinese Buddhist treatise; when they got to the point where it says, "Heaven and earth and I have the same root," Ch'en asked Fa Yen, "Are the mountains, rivers, and earth identical to your own self, or separate?" Fa Yen said, "Separate." Kuei Ch'en held up two fingers; the master said, "Identical." Ch'en again held up two fingers, then got up and left.

When Fa Yen was about to depart, Kuei Ch'en saw him to the gate, whereupon he asked, "You always say that the three worlds are only mind, and myriad things are only consciousness;" then he pointed to a rock in the garden and said, "But tell me, is this rock inside your mind or outside your mind?" Fa Yen said, "It is inside my mind." Kuei Ch'en said, "What reason does a traveller have to put a rock in his head?" Fa Yen was stumped and had no reply. So he put down his bundle and stayed by Kuei Ch'en to seek certainty.

For over a month he daily expressed his understanding and spoke of the principle. Ch'en said to him, "The Buddha Dharma is not like this." Fa Yen said, "My words are exhausted, my reason come to an end." Kuei Ch'en said, "If one were to discuss the Buddha Dharma, all things would appear in full." At these words, Fa Yen was greatly enlightened. (*Wu Teng* 10)

Later, he dwelt in the Ch'iung Shou Temple in Lin Ch'uan, where he began to teach. When Tzu Fang, an elder monk from the Ch'ang Ch'ing community came to call on him, Fa Yen

quoted Hui Leng's verse and said, "What is the unique body revealed in the midst of myriad forms?" Tzu Fang raised his whisk; Fa Yen said, "How can you understand it thus?" Tzu Fang said, "What is the master's honorable opinion?" Fa Yen said, "What do you call myriad forms?" Tzu Fang said, "The Ancients did not eliminate myriad forms." Fa Yen said, "In myriad forms there is a single body revealed; why talk about eliminating or not eliminating?" At these words, Tzu Fang was greatly awakened; he expressed himself in verse and submitted in sincerity.

Henceforth, people in congregations everywhere who were conscious of their understanding came in droves; at first they were unyielding, but the Master subtly aroused and awakened them, so that all of them eventually submitted to him. His ocean of followers was never less than one thousand persons. (*Ch'uan Teng Lu* 24)

(Fa Yen, the name by which Wen I is usually known to posterity, is an abbreviation of his posthumous title Ta Fa Yen Ch'an Shih, 'Meditation Master with the Great Eye of Reality.' He was also entitled Ch'ing Hui, 'Pure Wisdom,' and Ta Chih Tsang Ta Tao Shih, 'Great Guide, Repository of Great Knowledge.' His writings were said to have amounted to several tens of thousands of words; much, however, has been lost to posterity. Still extant, however, are a number of poems, and a treatise entitled *Tsung Men Shih Kuei Lun*, 'Ten Guidelines for the School,' an elegant treatise on Ch'an and a denunciation of the decadence of Ch'an schools in his time. Fa Yen had sixty-three enlightened disciples, including Te Shao, National Teacher of Wu-Yueh, Wen Sui, National Guide of Chiang Nan, and Hui Ch'u, National Teacher of Koryo, a Korean kingdom. The Fa Yen school flourished greatly into the third generation, but died out by the fifth, after about one hundred years. Te Shao also did much to revive the T'ien T'ai teachings in China; his disciple Yen Shou was also considered a patriarch of the Pure Land school, and was a great scholar and prodigious author.)

\*In some books he is referred to as Ti Ts'ang, in others, Lo Han; he lived for a while in Ti Ts'ang temple, where Fa Yen met him. Later he moved to Lo Han temple in Chang Chou.

## TS'UI YEN LING TS'AN (9-10c)

## CASE 8

Almost nothing is known of this master, beyond that he was a successor of Hsueh Feng. The compilers of the *Tsu T'ang Chi* state, "We have never seen any record of his doings. King Ch'ien respected him, and bestowed on him a purple vestment and the title Yung Ming Ta Shih, 'Great Teacher of Eternal Brilliance.' "

King Ch'ien\* was Ch'ien Liu, entitled King of Yueh in 902, and later became the King of Wu and Yueh in 907, under the new Liang dynasty.

There was a saying that one's eyebrows will fall out if one talks too much; in the version of this example recorded in the *Tsu T'ang Chi*, Ts'ui Yen says 'for the last thirty years' rather than 'this summer.' Judging from the paucity of his record, he died with his eyebrows on. There are, however, one or two sayings left:

A monk once asked, "When the ancients lifted the gavel or stood up the whisk, what was the inner meaning?"

Ts'ui Yen said, "A false teaching is hard to maintain."

The other characters in example 8 were also disciples of Hsueh Feng, and this is, no doubt, where this incident took place. Later on, Ts'ui Yen had two enlightened successors, of whom equally little is known as of their master.

\*The titular head of the empire being the Emperor, the term *wang* is translated as king, although these were regional titles and there were many such kings.

## PAO FU TS'UNG CHAN (?-928)

## CASES 8, 22, 23, 95

A man of Fu Chou, his lay surname was Ch'en. At the age of fifteen he went to Hsueh Feng and received instruction from him. At eighteen he was fully ordained at Ta Chung. After traveling in Wu and Chu (southern China), he later returned to Hsueh Feng and served as his attendant.

One day Hsueh Feng suddenly called him and said, "Do you understand?"

Pao Fu was about to approach, when Hsueh Feng poked him with his staff. At that moment, Pao Fu realized the ultimate; he bowed and withdrew. He also always used to ask Master Leng of Ch'ang Ch'ing about the expedient teachings of past and present; Leng deeply approved of him.

A monk asked, "If one wants to arrive on the Birthless Road, he must know the Basic Source; what is the basic source?"

The Master was silent for a long time. Then he asked his attendant, "What did that monk just ask?" When that monk quoted it again, the Master shouted at him and drove him out, saying, "I am not deaf."

Pao Fu's enlightened disciples numbered twenty-five.

## CH'ANG CH'ING HUI LENG (864-932)

CASES 8, 22, 23, 95

According to the *Ch'uan Teng Lu* (18),

"He was a man of Yen Kuan in Hang Chou; his lay surname was Tsun. As a child, he was of pure and peaceful nature. When he was thirteen years old he left home and received the precepts at T'ung Hsuan temple in Su Chou; then he traveled around visiting the Ch'an 'shops'.

"In 878 he went into Min and called on Hsi Yuan; then he visited Ling Yun, but he still had lingering doubts. Later he went to Hsueh Feng, and his feelings of doubt melted like ice."

According to the *Tsu T'ang Chi* (10),

"When he first went to study under Hsueh Feng, his tasks in the study were bitterly painful; he was not too brilliant. Hsueh Feng saw him going on like this and stopped him, saying, 'I am giving you a prescription for medicine for a dead horse; do you find it sweet?'

"He said, 'I will abide by the Master's judgement.'

"Hsueh Feng said, 'You do not need to come up here three or five times every day: just know how to be like a wooden pillar in a blazing fire in the mountain; put your body and mind at rest, for maybe as many as ten years, perhaps seven, or at least three years, and you will surely have understanding.'

"He followed Hsueh Feng's direction for two and a half years; one night his mind was active and he could not sit still,



so he went outside the temple building, walked three times around the tea garden, and sat down under a tree. Suddenly, as he was falling asleep, he awoke and returned to the temple. Going up from the eastern hall, the moment he entered the monks' hall he saw the lamp loom large and immediately had understanding. Thereupon he went to the Master Hsueh Feng's place, but before the master got up, he went away instead; leaning on the pillar of the teaching hall, he unconsciously let out a cry.

"The Great Teacher heard it and asked, 'Who is it?'

"Hui Leng called out his name; the Great Teacher said, 'What are you doing, coming here in the middle of the night?'

"He said, 'I have had an extraordinary perception.'

"The Great Teacher himself got up and opened the gate; he grabbed Hui Leng's hand and asked him about his inner condition. The latter, expressing his inner feeling, said in a verse,

*Wonder of wonders!*

*Rolling up a bamboo blind, I see the whole world\**

*If anyone asks me what sect I understand,*

*I would lift up my whisk and hit them right in the mouth!"*

According to *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* (7),

"He asked Ling Yun\*\* 'What is the big idea of the Buddhist teaching?'

"Ling Yung said, 'Before the business with the donkey is over with, a problem comes up with the horse.'

"The master went back and forth between Hsueh Feng and Hsuan Sha like this for a period of twenty years, and wore out seven sitting mats, but still did not clearly understand this matter. One day as he rolled up a bamboo blind, he was suddenly greatly awakened; thereupon he had a verse . . . (same as above).

"Hsueh Feng quoted this to Hsuan Sha and said, 'This lad has finished.' Hsuan Sha said, 'Not yet; this is an expression of conscious knowledge. He should be tested again.'

"In the evening, when the community of monks appeared to ask questions, Hsueh Feng said to the master, 'Ascetic Pei (Hsuan Sha) does not approve of you. If you really have correct realization, bring it up before the community.' The master again had a verse, saying,

*'Within myriad appearances, a solitary body is revealed:*

*Only when a person experiences it personally can he be acquainted with it.*

*In former times I wrongly looked to the road in search—*

*Now I look upon it like ice in fire.'*

Hsueh Feng looked at Hsuan Sha and said, "This can't still be an expression of conscious knowledge.'"

The master asked Hsueh Feng, "All sages from antiquity have transmitted and received a single path; please point it out to me."

Hsueh Feng remained silent; the master bowed and withdrew. Hsueh Feng smiled.

The master entered the abbot's quarters; Hsueh Feng said, "What is it?"

The master said, "Today the weather is clear, good for asking everyone to work." After this, his replies to questions were never out of accord with the mysterious meaning.

Ch'ang Ch'ing became a distinguished teacher, producing twenty-six successors.

\*Corrected according to *Wu Teng Hui Yuan*; the earlier version is somewhat garbled.

\*\*A successor of Kuei Shan Ling You.

## TAO TSUNG of Mu Chou (780–877)

### CASE 10

Master Ch'en (his lay surname was Ch'en) succeeded to Huang Po; he lived in Lung Hsing Temple in Mu Chou (in Chekiang). The master usually carried out his activities in secret; he always made straw sandals and sent them secretly to people. Because of this they called him "Ch'en the straw sandal monk." (*Tsu T'ang Chi* 19)

He first dwelt in Lung Hsing Temple in Mu Chou: he hid his traces and concealed his activity. He made straw sandals and secretly placed them on the street; after many years people came to know of this, so they called him "straw-sandal Ch'en." At the time, when there were students who sought his

inspiration, he would reply instantly to their questions, and his words were sharp; since he didn't follow a rut, therefore the shallow often derided him. Only profound students who were naturally bright respected and submitted to him; because of this, people from all quarters sought refuge with him and called him Reverend Ch'en. (*Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 12)

## HSI YUN of Huang Po (?–850)

### CASE 11

(Huang Po was a successor of Pai Chang, and produced thirteen enlightened disciples, among whom was Lin Chi I Hsuan, founder of the Lin Chi sect of Ch'an. The following sermon is excerpted from the *Ch'uan Hsin Fa Yao*, 'Essential Method of Transmission of Mind,' recorded by prime minister P'ei Hsiu; this version is taken from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 9:)

The Buddhas and all sentient beings are only one mind; there is nothing else. This mind, since beginningless past, has never been born, never perished; it is not green, not yellow; it has no shape or form. It is not subject to existence or non-existence, and is not to be considered new or old. It is not long or short, nor is it large or small; it transcends all limitation, measurement, names, words, traces or oppositions. This very substance is it; stir your thoughts and you miss it. It is like empty space; it has no bounds, and cannot be measured. Just this one mind itself is Buddha. Buddha and sentient beings are no different; it's just that sentient beings grasp appearances—seeking outwardly, they become more and more lost. If you employ Buddha to seek Buddha, use mind to grasp mind, you may go on all your life until the end of time, but will never succeed. Don't you realize that if you cease thinking and forget thought, Buddha will spontaneously appear?

## SHOU CH'U TSUNG HUI of Tung Shan (n.d.)

### CASE 12

(Not the more famous progenitor of the Ts'ao-Tung School, but one of Yun Men's disciples: the circumstances of his meeting

with Yun Men are told in the Commentary to the Verse of Case 12. The following anecdotes are recorded in the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 23:)

A monk asked, "When you're far far on the one road, what's it like?" The master said, "Not agreeing to go while the sky is clear, ending up waiting for the rain to soak your head." The monk said, "What about all the sages?" The master said, "They enter the mud and water."

A monk asked, "Before mind arises, where are things?" The master said, "With no wind, the lotus leaves move: certainly there's a fish swimming through."

A monk asked, "What are the three jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, the community of monks)?" The master said, "Impossible to discuss."

A monk asked, "What is the seamless memorial tower?" The master said, "A stone lion at the crossroads."

A monk asked, "What is the proper business of patchrobed monks?" The master said, "Up in the clouds on Mt. Chu, there's certainly a lot of wind and rain."

A monk asked, "What is buddha?" The master said, "Obviously true."

A monk asked, "A great multitude has gathered thick to beg the Master to take hold of the pivotal essentials and reveal a little of the great design." The master said, "A bubble floating on the water displays the five colors; at the bottom of the sea a frog is croaking, 'The moon is bright!'"

## Great Master HAO CHIEN of Hsin K'ai in Pa Ling, Yueh Chou (n.d.)

CASES 13, 100

(Pa Ling was a successor of Yun Men; there is no record of his enlightenment story. His nickname 'Mouthy' was because of his eloquence. He had two enlightened disciples.)

A monk asked, "Are the Patriarchal meaning and the meaning of the Teachings the same or different?" He said, "When chickens are cold, they roost in trees; when ducks are cold, they enter the water."

A monk asked, "I do not doubt the twelve part teachings of the three vehicles; what is the business of the Ch'an sect?" He

said, "This is not the business of a patchrobed monk." The monk asked, "What is the business of a patchrobed monk?" He said, "If you indulge in watching the foaming waves, you lose the oar in your hands."

He sent a whisk to someone. That person said, "It is fundamentally pure and clean; what is the use of a whisk?" The master said, "If you know it is pure and clean, don't forget it."

## CHING CH'ING (863–937)

CASES 16, 23, 46

(The following is from *Tsu T'ang Chi* 10:)

Master Ching Ch'ing succeeded to Hsueh Feng. He lived in Yueh Chou (Fukien). The master's name was Tao Fu; he was (originally) a man of Wen Chou (in Chekiang). When the master first went into Min (Fukien) he called on Ling Yun (a successor of Kuei Shan) and asked, "How do you point out the truth of the great concern of foot travelling?" Yun said, "What is the price of rice in Chekiang?" The master said, "I almost understood it as the price of rice." Then he continued on to Hsiang Ku (Hsueh Feng).

Hsueh Feng asked him, "Where are you from?" He replied, "I'll never say I was born and raised in Wen Chou." Feng said, "Then the Enlightened Overnight Guest (Yung Chia, a successor of the Sixth Patriarch) is a fellow villager of yours." He said, "Where was the Enlightened Overnight Guest from?" Feng said, "This lad deserves to be given a score of blows, but I'll let it go."

The master also asked, "Since antiquity, the ancestral worthies have spoken of the simile of an entry road; is this right or not?" Feng said, "Right." He said, "I am a beginner, only lately come to study; I request you, teacher, to point out an entry road." Feng said, "Just enter from here." The master said, "I am enshrouded with ignorance; again I ask you to point it out." (*n.b.* Hsueh Feng's answer is not too clear; one character in the text is indistinct. Both the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu*

and the *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* omit this story altogether. Hsueh Feng's answer seems to be, "I don't have many today; why sprawl out and fall right over?" Or it may read, "Hsueh Feng said, 'Today I am not too steady,' and he sprawled himself out and fell over.")

According to *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 7, at the age of six he didn't eat meat; when his parents force fed him with dried fish, he would immediately vomit it out. Eventually he sought to leave home, and received ordination at the state K'ai Yuan Temple in his native Wen Chou. Then he went foot travelling.

(The following is from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 18; it accords with the *Tsu T'ang Chi* except for slight vocabulary differences:)

One day the Master asked, "Did the ancient worthies not transmit mind by mind?" Hsueh Feng said, "And they did not set up written words or spoken phrases." He said, "If you don't set up written words or spoken phrases, how will you transmit it, teacher?" Hsueh Feng remained silent. The master bowed in thanks. Hsueh Feng said, "Shouldn't you ask something further?" He said, "I ask you for a question, teacher." Hsueh Feng said, "Is it just so, or do you think there is some other consideration besides?" He said, "For you teacher, just so is all right." Hsueh Feng said, "What about for you?" He said, "Turning completely away from people." (The *CTL* stops here; the *TTC* continues,) Hsueh Feng said, "What is the business of not turning away?" The master immediately bade fare-thee-well.

Hsueh Feng once said to the assembly, "Splendidly refined." The master came forth and said, "What splendid refinement is this?" Hsueh Feng got up and said, "What did you say?" The master then retreated and stood there.

Hsueh Feng said, "This matter is so noble, so refined." The master responded by saying, "In the years since (I) Tao Fu has been here, I have never heard the teacher instruct like this." Hsueh Feng said, "Although I hadn't before, now I already have; there's nothing wrong, is there?" He said, "I do not dare (to say so). This is only what the teacher cannot avoid." Hsueh Feng said, "Let me be like this." The master gained true entry by this, but for a while he still followed the congregation. In Min he was called 'Cloth-robed Little Fu.'

As they were working, Hsueh Feng quoted Kuei Shan's saying about seeing mind upon seeing form and asked the master, "Is there any fault or not?" The master said, "What was the ancient concerned about?" Hsueh Feng said, "Although you are right, I still want to deliberate with you." The master said, "Then it would be better if I went on hoeing."

One day Hsueh Feng asked the master, "Where have you come from?" He said, "From outside." Hsueh Feng said, "Where did you meet Bodhidharma?" He said, "Where else?" Hsueh Feng said, "I still don't believe you yet." He said, "Teacher, don't vilify me so." Hsueh Feng approved of him. Later he travelled all over to various places, adding more to his temporal wisdom.

(First he dwelt at Ching Ch'ing, then at T'ien Lung and Lung Ts'e temples; King Ch'ien of Min greatly respected him, and requested him to teach in these places. The *Ch'uan Teng Lu* says that mystic studies flourished in Wu-Yueh during his teaching there.)

Someone asked, "An Ancient (Tung Shan) had a saying, 'A man who is mindless unites with the Way'; how does a man without mind unite with the Way?" The master said, "Why do you not ask about 'The Way is mindless of union with man'?" "How is it that The Way is mindless of union with man?" The master said, "Though the white clouds may come to the blue mountain peak, how can the bright moon descend from the blue sky?"

(According to the *Tsu T'ang Chi*,) a monk asked, "What is 'leaping high'?" The master said, "Your eyes look upon the (most rare) Udambara (flower) as like a yellow leaf." "What is the Udambara like?" The master said, "It appears once in an aeon." "What is the yellow leaf?" The master said, "This is not yet real." The monk said, "Then there must still be something yet more transcendental." The master said, "Obviously." "What is the transcendental thing?" The master said, "When you drink the water of the Mirror Lake in one gulp, then I'll tell you."

"What is the single straight path to the spiritual source?" The master said, "The water of Mirror Lake is exceedingly deep."

(Ching Ch'ing had five successors.)

# TENG YUAN of Hsiang Lin Temple on Ch'ing Ch'eng Mountain in I Chou (n.d.)

## CASE 17

(Hsiang Lin succeeded to Yun Men, and himself produced three successors. He taught in western China. The following is from *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 15:)

A monk asked, "Why does delicious ghee turn into poison?" The master said, "Tao Chiang paper is expensive." He asked, "How is it when one sees mind upon seeing form?" The master said, "Just then where were you going and coming?" He said, "How is it when mind and objects are both forgotten?" The master said, "Sitting sleeping with your eyes open."

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of 'hiding one's body in the north star (big dipper)'?" The master said, "The moon resembles a drawn bow; little rain and much wind."

Someone asked, "What is the mind of all Buddhas?" The master said, "If it is pure, it is pure from beginning to end." He said, "How can I attain understanding of it?" The master said, "Don't be fooled by people."

Someone asked, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" The master said, "Who is the one walking?"

Someone asked, "What is the master's marvelous medicine?" The master said, "It is not apart from the myriad flavors." He said, "How is the one who takes it?" The master said, "Sip some and see."

Someone asked, "What is the one wellspring of Hsiang Lin?" The master said, "Mindfulness without interruption." He said, "How is the one who drinks from it?" The master said, "He measures it out according to his means."

# National Teacher HUI CHUNG of Nan Yang (?-776)

## CASES 18, 99

(The following biography is from *Tsu T'ang Chi*, 3:)

Hui Chung, the National Teacher, succeeded to the Sixth



Patriarch. His lay surname was Jan; he was a man of Chu Chow district in Yueh Chou (Fukien). When he was a child at home, he never spoke, nor did he ever cross the bridge in front of his house, up until the time he was sixteen years old, when a certain Ch'an master came; as soon as the boy saw him from afar, he ran out and over the bridge to greet him and pay obeisance. . . . His father, mother, relatives and neighbors from far and near all came and discussed this in amazement; they said, "How imponderable it is that since his infancy till his sixteenth year we have never once seen this boy speak, nor have we ever seen him cross the bridge in front of the house. But the moment he saw the monk, he acted like this. Perhaps this boy is different from ordinary people."

The boy then asked the Ch'an master, "I beg the master's compassion, to receive and ordain one of the living. I earnestly wish to take refuge in meditation and leave home."

The Ch'an master said, "The fact is that in the school of our sect, only the crown prince of a silver wheel-turning king, the grandson of a gold wheel-turning king, is able to continue the way of this school without letting it decline; you are a kid reared on a buffalo's back by a man and woman in a village of three families; how could you enter the gate of this sect? It is not something for which you are suited."

The boy said, "I submit to the Ch'an master that this teaching is of equanimity; there is no high or low. How can you speak so as to hinder my good intention? I ask the master again to extend your compassion and admit me."

The Ch'an master observed the boy's state, and said, "You shouldn't leave home like this to follow me."

The boy said, "Then to whom should I resort to leave home? Ch'an teacher, direct me to a master of the sect."

The Ch'an master said, "Have you ever heard of Ts'ao Ch'i?"

The boy said, "I do not even know what region Ts'ao Ch'i is in."

The Ch'an master said, "On Mt. Ts'ao Ch'i in Kuang Nan (Canton) there is a Good Friend; he is called the Sixth Patriarch, and his community is as large as six hundred. You go there to leave home. I am travelling to Mt. T'ien T'ai; you just go by yourself."

The boy then went into the bush and hid; avoiding his par-

ents, he immediately went. Three days' journey he traveled in two days; when it rained, he made a day's journey in one day. When he reached Ts'ao Ch'i, he luckily came at a time when the Patriarch was just about to expound the teaching. Immediately he bowed to the Patriarch. The Patriarch asked him, "Where do you come from?"

He replied, "I have just come near."

The Patriarch said, "Where were you born?"

The boy said, "Since having gotten the five skandhas, I have forgotten."

The Patriarch said, "Come near." The boy approached. The Patriarch said, "Tell me truly where you are from."

The boy said, "I am from Che Chung."

The Patriarch said, "You have come a long way to get here; what did you come for?"

The boy said, "For one thing, an enlightened teacher is difficult to encounter, and the true teaching is hard to hear. Secondly, I want to submit to you and abandon home. I beg the master's compassion to admit me."

The Patriarch said, "I tell you, don't abandon home."

The boy said, "Why do you say this?"

The Patriarch said, "You are a Sovereign; without moving shield or spear, for sixty years the Son of Heaven will be you. Just become an Emperor, and Buddhism will be principal."

The boy said, "I submit to the master that I would not want to be Son of Heaven for one hundred years, let alone sixty. I beg the master's compassion to accept me and let me abandon home."

The master then touched his head and gave him a prediction; "If you abandon home, you will be a Buddha standing alone in the world." Then he took him in and accepted him. He was on Mt. Pai Ya of Nan Yang cultivating his practice for forty years.

In 761 on the sixteenth day of the first month, he obeyed the summons of Emperor Su Tsung calling him to the capital, where he stayed in the western meditation hall of the Temple of a Thousand Blessings. Later he returned to the Abode of Light Temple. Both emperors Su Tsung and Tai Tsung personally accepted the bodhisattva precepts from him, and respectfully entitled him National Teacher.

(The two emperors are usually listed as successors to Hui

Chung; the master had three other successors, but Tan Yuan Ying Chen, who also appears in case 18, is the only one on whom any information is available. Perhaps the most famous dialogue recorded between these two is when Hui Chung called to Ying Chen three times, and three times Ying Chen responded; Chung said, "I had thought that I had turned my back on you, but it is you who have turned your back on me." Hui Chung was one of the last surviving successors of the Sixth Patriarch, and was greatly revered by later generations; see also case 69.)

## CHU TUN of Lung Ya Mountain in Hunan (834–920)

### CASE 20

Lung Ya succeeded to Tung Shan Liang Chieh, and produced five successors. The story of his first awakening is told in the commentary to the twentieth case; according to the *Tsu T'ang Chi* and later records, he finally asked Tung Shan, "What is the meaning of the Patriarch's coming from the West?" Tung Shan said, "When the Tung River reverses its flow, then I'll tell you." At this Lung Ya was enlightened. He stayed with Tung Shan for seven or eight more years. Later he had a following of five hundred disciples, and was entitled Great Master Witness to Voidness. Some of his sayings are to be found here and there in Yuan Wu's commentaries.

## WU HSUEH of Ts'ui Wei Temple on Chung Nan Mountain, Ch'ang An (n.d.)

### CASE 20

Ts'ui Wei was the successor of Tan Hsia T'ien Jan (738–824); among Ts'ui Wei's five enlightened successors was the great Ch'an Master Ta T'ung of Mount T'ou Tzu. The Emperor Hsi Tsung (r. 874–889) summoned him to the imperial precincts (Ch'ang An) to teach, and bestowed upon him the honorific purple robe, and the title Great Master Illumining Everywhere.

According to the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* (14), he first

asked Tan Hsia, "What is the teacher of all Buddhas?" Tan Hsia upbraided him, saying, "Fortunately you are fine on your own; why do you want to hold onto a wiping cloth?" The master retreated three steps: Tan Hsia said, "Wrong!" The master then moved forward; Tan Hsia said, "Wrong! Wrong!" The master lifted one leg, turned his body around, and left; Tan Hsia said, "You've got it, all right, but you're turning away from those Buddhas." The master realized the inner truth from this.

## I HSUAN of Lin Chi (?-867)

CASES 20, 32

(The story of Lin Chi's enlightenment given in the *Tsu T'ang Chi* 19 is quite different from that in the *Lin Chi Lu*, the 'Record of Lin Chi,' compiled by his distinguished disciple San Sheng Hui Jan. The latter version is given, with some variation, in the commentary to case 11; the *Tsu T'ang Chi* version is as follows:)

Master Huang Po said to his community, "In the old days I had a companion in the Way, a fellow student of Ta Chi (Ma Tsu), named Ta Yu (according to the *Ch'uan Teng Lu*, Ta Yu was actually a successor of Kuei Tsung Fa Ch'ang, who was a successor to Ma Tsu). This man travelled on foot all over, and his Dharma eye was clear all the way through. Now he is at Ta An; he does not like to dwell among crowds, but lives alone in a mountain hut. When we parted, he made a covenant with me, saying, 'Later on, if you should meet a spiritually sharp person, send one to call on me.'"

At that time the master (Lin Chi) was in the community; after he heard this, he immediately went to call (on Ta Yu). Once he got there, he told (Ta Yu) all of what (Huang Po) had said. In the evening, in the presence of Ta Yu he spoke of the treatise on Yoga and discussed 'only consciousness.' He also asked questions on difficult points, but Ta Yu remained aloof all night and did not answer. When dawn came, (Ta Yu) said to the master (Lin Chi), "This old monk lives alone in a mountain hut; considering that you came a long way, I let you stay for a night. Why have you been shamelessly spewing filth before me all night?" When he had spoken, (Ta Yu) beat (Lin Chi) several times with his staff, pushed him out the door and shut it.

The master returned to Huang Po and told him what had happened. When Huang Po heard this, he lowered his head and said, "An adept is like a blazing fire. It is lucky that you met a man; why then did you go in vain?"

The master again went to see Ta Yu. Ta Yu said, "Before you had no shame; what is your reason for coming again today?" When he finished speaking, he drove him out the door with his staff.

The master again returned to Huang Po and said to him, "This time I have not come back empty." Huang Po said, "Why?" The master said, "At one blow of the staff I entered the realm of Buddhas: even if I had my bones shattered and my body smashed for a hundred aeons and circled Mount Sumeru countless times carrying it on my forehead, I could never requite this profound debt of gratitude."

Huang Po, hearing this, rejoiced exceedingly in it; he said, "You know how to rest, and even assert yourself on your own."

After ten days, the master again took leave of Huang Po and went to Ta Yu's place. As soon as Ta Yu saw him, he immediately went to strike him: the master grabbed the staff and immediately pushed Ta Yu down; then he struck him on the back several times with his fist. Ta Yu then nodded repeatedly and said, "Dwelling alone in a mountain hut, I thought I had spent my whole life in vain; I never expected that today I would after all find a son." . . . Henceforth the master served Ta Yu for over ten years.

(Lin Chi had twenty-one successors, but not very much is known about them. Four of them, including the main figure of case 85, were hermits. One of his successors, Chih Kuan of Kuan Ch'i (cf. verse, case 52), also studied for three years under the nun Mo Shan, who was a disciple of the aforementioned Ta Yu. He served as the gardener in her community; later he said, 'I got half the ladle from poppa Lin Chi and half the ladle from mama Mo Shan; together they made the whole ladle, and having partaken, to this day I've been full, never hungry.' Hsing Hua Tsun Ching, whose line continued longest, also worked with San Sheng, Lin Chi's successor, and Wei Fu Ta Hsueh, another successor of Huang Po, after Lin Chi's death, before he was fully enlightened to Lin Chi's meaning, but he considered Lin Chi his teacher. San Sheng compiled the *Lin Chi Lu*, but the original version is lost, and this text, one of the most important documents of T'ang Ch'an, exists in a compilation

made by a later master of the Yun Men sect. The disturbed conditions in Northern China, where the early Lin Chi sect was mainly based, probably contribute to the gaps in our knowledge of this school in the ninth and early tenth centuries. The Lin Chi sect almost died out after the fourth generation, but was greatly revived by the disciples of Shou Shan Hsing Nien (925–993), the successor of Feng Hsueh Yen Chao (896–973; cases 38, 61). During the eleventh century, in the eighth generation of the sect, two outstanding masters appeared, Yang Ch'i Fang Hui and Huang Lung Hui Nan, from whom flowed what came to be known as the Yang Ch'i and Huang Lung branches. It was in the former lineage that Yuan Wu K'o Ch'in, the commentator of *The Blue Cliff Record*, appeared; this branch endured longer than the Huang Lung branch, and flourished exceedingly during the Southern Sung dynasty, with Yuan Wu producing more than one hundred successors, among whom Ta Hui also produced more than fifty. Many streams of Lin Chi Ch'an were introduced to Japan during the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries; by that time contemplation of the *kung an* was firmly established in the Lin Chi sect as a principal method, and this is true in the derivative Japanese Rinzai schools today.)

## Teaching Designs of LIN CHI (from the *Lin Chi Lu*)

### FOURFOLD HOST AND GUEST

Followers of the Way, according to the understanding of the Ch'an school, death and life are successive. Students, you must be very thorough-going. When host and guest see each other, then there is discussion back and forth. One may show his form to adapt to the person, or one may make use of the entire body: one may use situational strategy with joy or anger, or one may show half of himself; one may ride on a lion, or one may ride on an elephant.

If there is a true student, he will immediately shout, first setting forth a bowl of glue. If the teacher doesn't discern this

as an object, then he goes to that object and acts in various ways. The student then shouts, but the former will not agree to let go. This is a mortal disease, and cannot be cured; it is called a guest looking at a host.

Or it may be that the teacher doesn't bring anything out, but just follows the student's questions to dispossess him. The student, being dispossessed, won't let go till the death. This is host looking at guest.

Or there may be a student who comes before the teacher in a state of purity. The teacher, discerning that this is an object, takes it and throws it into a pit. The student says, 'Good teacher!' Then the teacher says, 'Bah! You do not know good from bad.' The student then bows. This is called host looking at host.

Or there may be a student who comes before the teacher wearing stocks and bound with chains. The teacher adds another layer of stocks and chains, and the student rejoices; neither of them are discerning. This is called guest looking at guest.

Worthies, what I have raised here is all to discern demons and pick out heretics, to know their falsehood or verity.

#### FOURFOLD ILLUMINATION AND FUNCTION

Sometimes I first illumine and then function; sometimes I first function and then illumine. Sometimes illumination and function are at the same time, and sometimes illumination and function are not at the same time.

I first illumine and then function when there is still person (subject). I first function and then illumine when there are still phenomena (object). Illumination and function at the same time is 'driving away the plowman's ox, taking away the hungry man's food, smashing bone and taking the marrow, pressing needle and awl into the sore spot.'

When illumination and function are not at the same time, there are questions, there are answers, guest and host are established; it is mingling with the mud and water, responding to potential in dealing with people.

If one is a man beyond measure, he will immediately get up and go before it is mentioned, and still will get somewhere.

## FOUR PROPOSITIONS

Sometimes I take away the subject (person), but not the object (environment); sometimes I take away the object but not the subject. Sometimes subject and object are both taken away, and sometimes neither subject nor object is taken away.

A monk asked, "What is 'taking away subject but not object'?"

The master said, "The warm sun bursts forth, spreading the land with brocade; an infant's hair hangs down white as silk."

"What is 'taking away object but not subject'?"

The Master said, "The king's command is already in effect all over the land; the general beyond the borders is free from smoke and dust."

"What is 'subject and object both taken away' like?"

The master said, "The regions of Fen and P'ing have cut off communication—they occupy one region alone." (*N.b.* Fen and P'ing were two regions which had seceded from the control of the T'ang dynasty.)

"What is 'neither subject nor object taken away' like?"

The master said, "The king ascends his jewel palace, old peasants sing hallelujah."

## THE FOUR SHOUTS

The Master asked a monk, "Sometimes a shout is like the Diamond King's jewel sword, sometimes a shout is like a golden haired lion crouching on the ground; sometimes a shout is like a probing pole or reed shade; sometimes a shout does not function as a shout: how do you understand?" The monk hesitated, whereupon the Master shouted.

## KUANG TSO of Chih Men in Sui Chou (Ssuchuan) (n.d.)

CASES 21, 90

(Known as Chih Men, he succeeded to Hsiang Lin Teng Yuan, and was the teacher of Hsueh Tou, the poet of *The Blue Cliff*



*Record.* Besides Hsueh Tou, he had 29 other enlightened successors. The two examples given here are from *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 15:)

"I remember that in my mother's womb I had a saying: today I quote it for everyone; you can't evaluate it rationally. Is there anyone who can evaluate it? If you can't evaluate it, thirty years hence do not quote it wrongly."

Hsueh Tou asked Chih Men, "When one doesn't arouse a single thought, how can there be any fault?" Men called Hsueh Tou to approach; as soon as Hsueh Tou came near, Chih Men hit him right on the mouth with his whisk. As Hsueh Tou was about to open his mouth, Chih Men hit him again; Hsueh Tou was opened up and enlightened.

Li Tsun Hsu, a military governor under the Sung dynasty and an enlightened lay student of Ch'an, petitioned the Emperor to honor Chih Men with a purple robe, symbolic of highest rank. The Emperor Jen Tsung (r. 1023–1063) granted the purple vestment, but Chih Men refused to accept it. The Emperor, however, did not admit the master's refusal, and finally Chih Men was obliged to accept; he said to his community, "Although this old monk's original intention is to cover this illusory body with shabby garments and fend off the pangs of hunger with coarse food, I can do nothing about the fact that the military governor has asked the Emperor to regale me with a purple robe; if I put it on, it will go against my original intent, yet if I don't put it on, it will go against the will of the Emperor. But leaving aside the issue of putting it on or not for the moment, you tell me: what robe did the patriarchs wear? If you really know, though you wear clothes all day, you have never put on so much as a single thread, and though you eat all day, you have never chewed so much as a single grain of rice. If you don't really know, watch this old monk put on this robe to-day." (This incident is cited by Kato Totsudo in his *Hekigan-rok Daikoza*, vol. 4, page 267.)

## GRAND MASTER TSUNG I of Hsuan Sha in Fu Chou (n.d.)

CASES 22, 88

(Hsuan Sha was the spiritual grandfather of Fa Yen Wen I, and the Fa Yen Sect is referred to in the *Ch'uan Teng Lu* as the

Hsuan Sha Sect. He was a successor of Hsueh Feng, and produced thirteen enlightened disciples.)

His Dharma name was Shih Pei; he was a man of Min district in Foochow. His lay surname was Hsieh. When he was young he liked to fish, and used to go out in a little boat on the Nan T'ai river, associating with the fishing folk.

In the beginning of the Hsien T'ung era of the T'ang dynasty (869–873), when he was thirty years old, he suddenly wanted to abandon the world. So he gave up his fish hook and boat, and submitted to Ch'an master Ling Hsun of Lotus Mountain (a successor of Kuei Tsung Fa Ch'ang, also Hsueh Feng's original teacher), who shaved his head. He went to the K'ai Yuan Temple at Yu Chang and received full ordination from preceptual master Tao Hsuan.

He wore a patched robe of coarse cloth and sandals made of straw. He always sat peacefully all day long; the entire community considered him unusual.

He was a later come fellow student with Hsueh Feng I Tsun in their original school (under the teacher Ling Hsun); and he associated with (Hsueh Feng) like master and disciple. Because of his painful practice, Hsueh Feng called him the ascetic.

One day Hsueh Feng asked, "Which one is Ascetic Pei?" He replied, "I would never dare to deceive anyone."

Another day Hsueh Feng called him and said, "Ascetic Pei, why do you not travel to study at other places?" He said, "Bodhidharma did not come to China; the second patriarch did not go to India." Hsueh Feng approved of this. (According to *Tsu T'ang Chi* 10, Shih Pei started off on his journeys, but was suddenly enlightened when he happened to stumble on a rock. Afterwards he shouted and said, "Bodhidharma did not come over; the second patriarch did not obtain the transmission.")

(When Hsueh Feng went to Elephant Bone Mountain in 872, Hsuan Sha accompanied him and helped to build a monastery there. He 'clearly discovered the mindground' when he read the Surangama Sutra, and 'students of the mystery who had some uncertainty would always seek further help from him.')

## HERMIT HSIANG of Lotus Flower Peak

### CASE 25

After enlightenment, before accepting a request to dwell in a monastery as the guide of a community, Ch'an adepts usually

spent years travelling and/or living in seclusion or semi-seclusion, "maturing the holy embryo." Some, like Hsiang, the hermit of Lotus Flower Peak (on Mount T'ien T'ai, one of the five holy mountains of China), remained in humble circumstances as hermits all their lives, though small groups of seekers would come to live near them and call on them for instruction. The following brief sermon of hermit Hsiang, taken from the *Chih Yueh Lu*, "Finger Pointing at the Moon," is the greater part of the very little information we have about this Ch'an master:

"This matter is most urgent: you must clearly apprehend it; once you get it clear, at all times you will avoid being bound up and will be at ease wherever you are. Yet don't use your mind to overcome by force; you must fit into the ancient groove naturally. As soon as you get to study and analysis, you are eager to make some principle into a standard for the Buddhist teaching; (if you go on this way,) when will you ever attain to rest of the mind ground? Elders, I ask you to be thoroughgoing in this way."

The saying in case 25 was spoken by the hermit just before he died.

## HUAI HAI of Pai Chang (720–814)

CASES 26, 53, 70, 71, 72, 73

(Pai Chang was one of the foremost successors of Ma Tsu; the circumstances of his enlightenment are told in case 53. Pai Chang compiled the so-called 'pure standards' for Ch'an monasteries, and is thus known as the founder of the independent Ch'an monastic institution in China. From Pai Chang's successors emerged the Kuei-Yang and Lin Chi sects of Ch'an. The following sayings, excerpted from the extensive record of his sermons, are in answer to a question about the essential method for sudden enlightenment in the great vehicle:)

You should all first put an end to all ties, and lay to rest all concerns; whether good or bad, mundane or transmundane, anything at all—do not remember, do not recollect, do not engage your thoughts with them. Abandon body and mind, letting them be free. With mind like wood or stone, mouth makes no object of distinction, mind pursues no activity; then

the mind ground becomes like space, wherein the sun of illumination spontaneously appears. It is as though clouds had opened and the sun emerged.

Just put an end to all fettering connections; feelings of greed, anger, love, grasping, defilement and purity, all come to an end: unmoved in the face of five lusts and eight winds, not entangled by seeing, hearing, awareness, or knowledge, not confused by various objective realms, naturally endowed with the wondrous use of paranormal powers, this is a liberated man.

In the presence of all objects, mind being neither still nor disturbed, neither concentrated nor scattered, passing through all sound and form without lingering or obstruction, is called being a man of the Way. Not setting in motion good, evil, right, or wrong; not clinging to a single thing, not rejecting a single thing, is called being a man of the great vehicle. Not bound by any good, evil, emptiness, existence, defilement, purity, doing, non-doing, mundane, supramundane, blessings, virtue, knowledge or wisdom, is called Buddha wisdom.

Once affirmation and negation, like and dislike, approval and disapproval, all various opinions and feelings come to an end and can't bind, then one is free wherever he may be; this is called a bodhisattva with a newly aroused mind immediately ascending to the stage of Buddhahood.

## P'U YUAN of Nan Ch'uan (747–834)

CASES 28, 31

The Master's lay surname was Wang, and he often referred to himself as "Old Teacher Wang." In 757, at the age of ten, he received instruction from the meditation master Ta Hui of Mt. Ta Wei; at thirty, he went to Mt. Sung in Honan, one of the five holy mountains of China, where he was formally ordained as a Buddhist monk. He learned the doctrines of the Fa Hsiang school, which analyzes existence into one hundred elements and maintains that the world is created and maintained as it is by the force of mental habit, giving a detailed account of the workings of the mind. He also made a thorough study of the Vinaya, monastic rules of conduct inherited from Indian Buddhism. Then he travelled around, hearing the *Lankavatara* "Entrance (of the Great Vehicle) into Ceylon" and *Avatam-*

*saka* (*Hua Yen*) "Flower Garland" scriptures expounded. The former scripture maintains that all that can be known of the world is purely subjective, and distinguishes three levels of reality; pure mental construction; relative coexistence—of sense, sense consciousness, and sense data—or interdependent co-production; and perfectly real, which is emptiness: mental construction is projected on relative coexistence, which, being purely relative, has no ultimate basis in fact and is in reality empty. The Flower Garland scripture also speaks of the relative co-production of all things in the cosmos, which means that everything is inherent in everything else; this is expressed symbolically by the net of Indra, made of jewels which each reflect all the other jewels, as well as the reflections of all the jewels in each jewel, and so on, ad infinitum to the power of infinity to an infinite infinity of powers: the ultimate pivot of interdependence is that of mind and matter. Hence this scripture says that the cosmos is produced by the mind, yet the mind does not exist of itself. Nan Ch'uan also studied the *San Lun* or "Three Treatise" school, which teaches the Middle Way based on the works of Nagarjuna and Kanadeva; accordingly, he practiced the contemplations of emptiness, conditional existence, and the mean.

Finally, after many years of study and practice, he called on the great Ch'an Master Ma Tsu Tao I in Hung Chou (in Kiangsi), and attained complete freedom. At the time there were eight hundred people in Ma Tsu's congregation, and P'u Yuan was considered the foremost; no one would dare to debate with him. In 795 he went to Mt. Nan Ch'uan in Ch'ih Chou (in Anwei), built himself a hut, and scratched out his own subsistence from the mountainside. It is said that he didn't come down from the mountain for over thirty years. In the beginning of the Ta Ho era (827–836), he was invited by Lu Hsuan to come down and teach. After that, his followers were never less than several hundred. He had seventeen enlightened disciples, including the famous Chao Chou, Ch'ang Sha, and Tzu Hu. Among Ma Tsu's one hundred and thirty-nine enlightened disciples, Nan Ch'uan is considered along with Pai Chang Huai Hai and Hsi T'ang Chih Ts'ang as the greatest of all time. He once said, "People these days walk around with 'Buddha' on their shoulders; when you hear me say that mind is not Buddha and wisdom is not the Path, you gather together

and try to figure me out. You cannot figure me out. If you could wrap empty space up into a staff and hit me with it, then you might figure me out."

## FA CHEN of Ta Sui (n.d.)

### CASE 29

(Ta Sui succeeded to Ta An, also known as Ta Kuei, or Kuei Shan Ho Shang, who was a disciple of Pai Chang Huai Hai, and later an assistant to Kuei Shan Ling Yu.)

Someone asked, "What happens when birth and death arrive?" The master said, "When there is tea, drink tea; when there is rice, eat rice."

Someone asked, "What is the essential of the Dharma of all Buddhas?" The master raised his whisk and said, "Do you understand?" He said, "I don't understand." The master said, "An elk-tail whisk."

(The lord of Shu summoned Ta Sui repeatedly, but the master refused each time, claiming to be old and sick. The lord bestowed on him the honorific title Spiritual Illumination.)

## PAO CHE of Mt. Ma Ku (n.d.)

### CASE 31

(Ma Ku was one of Ma Tsu's successors: the following is taken from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7:)

One day as Ma Ku was walking along with Ma Tsu he asked, "What is great extinction?" Ma Tsu said, "Swift." Ma Ku said, "What's the hurry?" Ma Tsu said, "Look at the river."

Once when Ma Ku was wandering in the mountains with Tan Hsia,\* he saw a fish in a stream and pointed to it with his hand. Tan Hsia said, "Naturally, naturally."\*\* The next day Ma Ku again questioned Tan Hsia, "What did you mean yesterday?" Tan Hsia relaxed his body and made the motion of lying down. Ma Ku said, "Heavens!" Another time he travelled with Tan Hsia to Mt. Ma Ku. Ma Ku said, "I'm staying here." Tan Hsia said, "Well, I'll let you stay, but do you still have That One or not?" Ma Ku bade him farewell.

A monk asked, "I am not in doubt about the twelve part

teachings (of the Buddhist canon), but what is the meaning of the coming from the West?" Ma Ku stood up, circled his body once with his staff, raised one foot and said, "Understand?" The monk had no reply, so Ma Ku hit him.

Tan Yuan asked, "Is Twelve-Faced Avalokitesvara ordinary or holy?" Ma Ku said, "Holy," whereupon Tan Yuan struck him a blow. Ma Ku said, "I knew you hadn't gotten to this realm."

\*Tan Hsia was a successor of Shih T'ou and also spent time in Ma Tsu's community.

\*\*Tan Hsia's initiatory name, given him by Ma Tsu, was Tzu Jan, "Natural."

## HUAI HUI of Chang Ching Temple in the Capital District (?–818)

### CASE 31

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7:)

He was from T'ung An in Ch'uan Chou (in Hopei); his surname was Hsieh. He received Ma Tsu's mind seal. First he stayed at Oak Cliff in Ting Chou (in Hopei); then he stayed on Chung T'iao Mountain. In the beginning of the Yuan Ho era (806–820) Emperor Hsien Tsung summoned him to reside at Mystic Temple: there students flocked to him.

The master went up into the Hall and taught his disciples saying, "The ultimate principle is oblivious of words. People these days have not comprehended this, so they force themselves to study extraneous matters, considering this an accomplishment. They do not know that their own nature was originally not the dusty realm (of the senses), but rather the subtle mysterious gate of great liberation. All reflection and awareness neither stains nor obstructs this. This light has never been stopped or nullified: from the primordial past up to now, it has been solid and changeless. It's like the solar disc illuminating far and near: though it touches the many colors, it doesn't mix with them all. The wondrous illumination of the spiritual lamp does not depend on tempering and refining. Since you haven't understood, you cling to the forms of things—it's just like rubbing your eyes and producing false op-

tical illusions. Thus you vainly trouble yourselves, wasting ages of time. If you can turn the light around so that there is no second person, the activities you undertake will not lack the characteristics of reality."

## JU PAO of Tzu Fu in Chi Chou (in Kiangsi) (n.d.)

CASE 33

Tzu Fu succeeded to Ch'an master Kuang Mu of the Western Pagoda on Yang Shan; a fourth generation master of the Kuei-Yang lineage, he produced four enlightened disciples. His biography is in *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 12.

A monk asked, "What is a phrase responding to potential?" The master was silent. "What is the hidden essence?" The master said, "Close the door for me." "When Lu Tsu sat facing a wall, what was his meaning?" The master said, "Irrelevant." "What is the truly correct eye of all time?" The master struck his breast and said, "Alas! Alas!" "What is the master's family style?" The master said, "Three cups of tea after rice."

## HUI CHI of Yang Shan (813–890)

CASES 34, 68

(Yang Shan was a brilliant master, nicknamed 'little Shakyamuni.' According to the *Tsu T'ang Chi*, eleven regional inspectors, officials of the civil government, paid obeisance to him as their teacher. Before he was twenty years old, he had already called on successors of Nan Ch'uan, National Teacher Hui Chung, Ma Tsu, and Pai Chang; he was fully enlightened with Kuei Shan, and stayed there for fifteen years. There are various stories of his awakening. According to the *Jen T'ien Yen Mu*, after he had received the teaching of ninety-seven circular figures from Tan Yuan, who got it from Hui Chung, when he came to Kuei Shan, the latter showed him the figure of the empty circle—the 'full moon,' whereat he was enlightened. According to Dogen, the thirteenth century Japanese master, Kuei Shan first set Yang Shan to work herding buffalo



for three years. The following is from the *Ch'uan Teng Lu* 10:)

Yang Shan asked Kuei Shan, "What is the abode of the real Buddha?"

Kuei Shan said, "With the subtlety of thinking the thoughtless, return thought to the boundlessness of the spiritual effulgence; when thought is exhausted, return to the source, where nature and appearances always abide, phenomena and principle are not two; the true Buddha is thus."

At these words Yang Shan was suddenly enlightened.

(Besides the use of circular figures, the dialogues of Kuei Shan and Yang Shan are known as hallmarks of the Kuei-Yang sect; Yang Shan once said that the essence of the sect was 'two mouths without a single tongue,' symbolizing the meeting of minds. The ninety-seven circular symbols handed down from Hui Chung are now lost; it is said that Yang Shan burned the book which contained them after he had read it once. Tan Yuan, who had given it to him, lamented this, so Yang Shan made another copy from memory and returned it to him. In the twelfth century, a master of the Yun Men sect named P'u Liang made a compilation containing forty or fifty examples, but this work too is lost; it is known, however, that he arranged them into six rubrics: 'circle,' 'merging of personality,' 'ocean of meaning,' 'ocean of characters,' 'speech,' and 'silent discourse.')

## CHING TS'EN, 'Great Master Chao Hsien' of Ch'ang Sha in Hunan (n.d.)

### CASE 36

(Known as Ch'ang Sha, he was a distinguished successor of Nan Ch'uan; the following is taken from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 10)

He first dwelt at the Deer Park, where he was the first generation; after that he dwelt in no fixed abode, but just went along with circumstances and expounded the Dharma as was appropriate to the occasion. At the time he was called 'The Teacher of Ch'ang Sha.'

*In the hall he said, If I were to thoroughly uphold the teaching of our sect, there would be weeds a fathom deep in the teaching hall; (but) I am unable to avoid facing all of you people and saying that the entire cosmos is the eye of a monk; the entire cosmos is the whole body of a monk; the entire cosmos is one's own light; the entire cosmos lies within one's own light; in the whole cosmos there is no one who is not oneself.*

*I always tell you people that the Buddhas of the triple world, the cosmos, and the mass of living beings, are the light of great perfect wisdom. When the light has not yet shone forth, where can you people turn to become intimately acquainted with it? Before the light shines forth, there isn't even any news of Buddhas or sentient beings; where do we get the mountains, rivers, and earth?*

At that time a monk asked, "What is the monk's eye?"

The master said, "Never, ever can one depart from it; (those who) attain Buddhahood and become patriarchs cannot depart from it; the six paths of transmigration cannot depart from it."

The monk said, "What is it that they cannot depart from?"

The master said, "In daytime, seeing the sun; at night, seeing stars."

The monk said, "I don't understand."

The master said, "Marvelous towering mountains, their color blue upon blue."

A monk asked, "Who is the teacher of all Buddhas?"

The master said, "By whom has he been concealed ever since beginningless aeons?"

A monk asked, "How is it when the student does not depend on the ground?"

The master said, "Where will you rest your body and live?"

He asked, "Then how is it when he does depend on the ground?"

The master said, "Drag this corpse away!"

He asked, "What are 'different kinds'?"

The master said, "A foot is short, an inch is long."

The master sent a monk to ask Teacher Hui, a former fellow student, "How is it after the teacher had seen Nan Ch'uan?"

Hui was silent. The monk said, "How about before the teacher had seen Nan Ch'uan?" Hui said, "There could not be another besides." The monk returned and quoted this to the master. The master spoke a verse, saying,

*The unmoving man atop the hundred-foot pole:  
Though he has gained entry, he is not yet real.  
Atop the hundred-foot pole, he should step  
forward—  
The whole universe in the ten directions is his  
whole body.*

The monk then asked, "Atop the hundred-foot pole, how to advance?" The master said, "Mountains of Liang, rivers of Li." The monk said, "I don't understand." The master said, "The whole country is under the imperial sway."

(Many more sayings are attributed to Ch'ang Sha; he had two enlightened successors.)

## PAO CHI of P'an Shan in Yu Chou (n.d.)

### CASE 37

(P'an Shan was a successor of Ma Tsu; his abode was in northern China, near modern-day North Korea. He was one of the few early Ch'an masters to teach in this region. Of his two successors, P'u Hua is the only one about whom anything is known; P'u Hua later assisted the great Lin Chi in his teaching. The story of P'an Shan's enlightenment is given in *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 3.)

As the master was walking through a market place, he saw a customer who was buying some pork say to the butcher, "Cut me a pound of the fine stuff." The butcher put down his cleaver, folded his hands and said, "Inspector, which isn't fine?" At this, the master had insight.

Again one day when he had gone out of the monastery, he saw people in mourning, singing and ringing bells: "The red disc inevitably sinks into the west; we don't know where the ghost will go." Inside an enclosure, a filial son was crying, "Alas! Alas!" The master's body and mind leaped; he returned and told Ma Tsu about it. Ma Tsu gave him his seal of approval.

(The saying which forms case 37 is taken from a longer sermon of P'an Shan, other parts of which are repeatedly quoted in Yuan Wu's commentaries throughout the text. The following version is from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7; given in parentheses are significant variants from the version given in *Tsu T'ang Chi* 15:)

If there is no concern in the mind, myriad forms are unborn. When the mind is devoid of subtle activity, where can a trace of dust remain? The Way fundamentally has no substance; because of speaking, a name is established. The Way fundamentally has no name; because of naming, an epithet is found. If you say the very mind itself is identical to Buddha, still people these days have not yet entered the profound subtlety; if you say it is not mind, not Buddha, this is still the ultimate example of pointing to the traces. The one road going upwards, the thousand sages did not transmit; students toil over forms like monkeys grasping at reflections. The Great Way has no middle; who then goes forward or back? The eternal void is without bound; how could it be measured? Since the void is like this, how could the Way be spoken of? The mind-moon solitary and full, its light engulfs myriad forms: the light is not shining on objects, and the objects also do not remain; when light and objects are both gone, then what thing is this? Ch'an worthies, it is like hurling a sword into the sky; do not speak of reaching or not reaching: then the wheel of the void is without a trace, the sword's blade is without a flaw. If you can be like this, mind and mental conditions are without knowledge. The whole mind is identical to Buddha; the whole Buddha is identical to man. When mind and Buddha are not different, then this is the Way. Ch'an worthies should study the middle path: like the earth supporting a mountain, unaware of the mountain's steep height; like a stone containing a gem, without knowing the gem is flawless. If you can be like this, this is called Leaving Home. Thus the Guide said, "Things fundamentally do not hinder each other; the three times are also the same." A non-doing, unconcerned man still has the problem of the golden chains; therefore an Ancient said, "The spiritual source shines alone; the Path is fundamentally birthless." Great wisdom is not clarity; the true void is trackless. In true thusness, "ordinary" and "holy" are all dream talk; "Buddha" and "Nirvana" are both excess words. Ch'an worthies, you must see for your-

selves; no one can substitute for you. There is nothing in the triple world; where can mind be found? The four elements are originally void; how can a Buddha abide? The turning potential doesn't move (The oracle doesn't move); it is silent and rootless (it is silent and speechless). Once it is presented right to your face, there is nothing else. Farewell.

## YEN CHAO of Feng Hsueh (896–973)

CASES 38, 61

Feng Hsueh originally studied Confucianism; he sat for the civil service examination once, but failed. After that, he abandoned home to become a Buddhist. First he studied the 'stopping and observing' methods of T'ien T'ai Buddhist meditation; he then turned to Ch'an. He finally succeeded to Nan Yuan Hui Yung, a third generation Lin Chi master. He first taught at Feng Hsueh in Ju Chou (in Honan), at the request of the community there. He spent a summer in the Yamen at Ying Chou because the local army had revolted and the area was in danger. Later he was requested to return to Ju Chou, where he spent the last twenty-two years of his life teaching a congregation of over a hundred students.

Hsing Nien of Shou Shan, who was a latecomer to Feng Hsueh's community, served as the receiver of guests there: according to the *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 11, one day as he was standing by, Hsueh wept and said to him, "Unfortunately, the way of Lin Chi, having reached me, is about to fall to the ground." Hsing Nien said, "As you look upon this whole community, is there no one at all?" Hsueh said, "There are many who are intelligent, but few who perceive nature." Nien said, "What about me?" Hsueh said, "Though I've had hopes for you for a long time, I still fear you are addicted to this sutra and can't let it go." (Hsing Nien constantly recited the Lotus Sutra to himself.) Nien said, "This too should be served: but I beg to hear its essence." Hsueh then went into the hall and cited the World Honored One's looking over the great crowd with his blue lotus eyes, then said, "Tell me, at that time, what did he say? If you say he spoke without speaking, this is still burying that former sage. Tell me, what did he say?" Nien then shook out his sleeves and left.

Hsueh threw down his staff and returned to the abbot's room; his attendant followed him and asked for further instruction, saying, "Why did Nien not answer you, master?" Hsueh said, "Nien understands."

The next day as Hsing Nien went along with gardener Chen to inquire (into the master's health), Hsueh asked Chen, "What is the World Honored One's unspoken speech?" Chen said, "A dove calling in a tree." Hsueh said, "Why do you make so much abundance of folly? Why don't you thoroughly investigate the spoken phrases?" He also asked Hsing Nien about it; Nien said, "Activity upholds the ancient road, without falling into passivity." Feng said to Chen, "Why don't you observe Nien's comment?"

After Hsing Nien had received Feng Hsueh's seal of approval, he obliterated his tracks and concealed his light.

(Shou Shan Hsing Nien (925–992) later appeared to teach, as the first patriarch of Shou Shan; this was in the beginning of the Sung dynasty, when the country was more stable. Shou Shan had sixteen successors, among whom was Fen Yang Shan Chao (947–1024), said to be an originator of poetic commentary to ancient *kung an*. Fen Yang is said to have seen seventy-one teachers, and attempted to synthesize the various illustrative schemes of the Ch'an schools; the Lin Chi branch of Ch'an flourished greatly with his successors and descendants, becoming the dominant school of Buddhism in China.)

## TA T'UNG of Mt. T'ou Tzu (845–914)

CASES 41, 79, 80, 91

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 15)

He was a man from Huai Ning in Shu Chou (in Anhui); his surname was Liu. He left home at an early age. . . . He first practiced breath-contemplation; next he investigated the Hua Yen teachings and discovered the ocean of nature. He visited the Dharma assembly on Mt. Ts'ui Wei and was suddenly awakened to Ts'ui Wei's source meaning. (This is told in the *Ch'uan Teng Lu* 14:)

T'ou Tzu asked Ts'ui Wei, "I wonder, when the Second Patriarch first saw Bodhidharma, what was really attained?" Ts'ui Wei said, "What is attained right now when you see me?" One

day as Ts'ui Wei was walking inside the Dharma Hall, T'ou Tzu approached him, bowed, and asked, "Teacher, how do you show people the secret message of the coming from the West?" Ts'ui Wei stopped for a moment. T'ou Tzu again said, "Please, Teacher, instruct me." Ts'ui Wei said, "Do you want a second ladleful of foul water besides?" T'ou Tzu bowed in thanks and withdrew.

(After this) T'ou Tzu wandered all over as he pleased, returning to frequent his native territory. He concealed himself on Mt. T'ou Tzu (which is in Shu Chou), built a grass hut, and lived there.

(The following story leads up to the dialogue between Chao Chou and T'ou Tzu that makes the Main Case 41:) One day Master Shen of Chao Chou came to (a nearby district); T'ou Tzu too had come down from the mountain that day. They encountered each other on the road without recognizing each other. Chao Chou privately asked a lay gentleman and found out it was T'ou Tzu. Then he turned back (to go after him). He asked, "Aren't you the master of Mt. T'ou Tzu?" T'ou Tzu said, "I beg you for a coin for the tea and salt tax." Chao Chou then went up onto Mt. T'ou Tzu first and sat there in his hut, (waiting for T'ou Tzu to return.) Later T'ou Tzu returned to his hermitage, bringing along a jar of oil. Chao Chou said, "I've long heard of T'ou Tzu, but now that I've come here I just see an old man selling oil." T'ou Tzu said, "You just see an old man selling oil, but you don't know T'ou Tzu." Chao Chou said, "What is T'ou Tzu?" T'ou Tzu said, "Oily oil." Chao Chou said, "How is it when gaining life amidst death?" T'ou Tzu said, "One must not go by night; one must get there by daylight." Chao Chou said, "I'm a swindler, yet you swindled me."

Henceforward T'ou Tzu's Path was heard of all over the country, and "cloud and rain" folk (traveling Ch'an students) flocked to him. The master told the assembly, "All of you have come here trying to find fresh new sayings and beautiful verses. I am an old man whose strength has dwindled, my way of talking is slow and blunt. If you question me, I'll follow you and give my reply. I have no hidden marvels that can be conveyed to you. . . . Here there is nothing that can be given to you, there is no outside or inside that can be related to you. Do all of you realize this?" . . . The master lived on Mt. T'ou Tzu for over thirty years. He dealt with and aroused those who came seeking instruction who constantly filled his room.

The Huang Chao revolt broke out in 881 and there was chaos throughout the country. A madman came up the mountain carrying a blade; he asked T'ou Tzu what he was living there for, so the master expounded the Dharma in accordance with the situation to the man. When he heard this, the man bowed and submitted; then he stripped off his clothes and gave them to T'ou Tzu and went away.

In 914 the master showed a slight illness: the congregation wanted to call a doctor, but the master told them, "The activity of the four elements is a continual process of assembly and dissolution. Don't you worry: I'll preserve myself." When he finished talking, he sat cross-legged and died.

## LAYMAN P'ANG (8-9 cent.)

### CASE 42

(Layman P'ang succeeded to both Shih T'ou and Ma Tsu, the foremost teachers of the eighth century. He had been a minor civil official, but later he took all his wealth and sank it in a river. His family of a wife, son, and daughter split up, and he went from place to place with his daughter, weaving bamboo baskets and selling them to make a living. In his travels he visited many of the Ch'an masters who had succeeded to Ma Tsu. The following account is excerpted from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 8)

His name was Tao Hsuan: in the world, Confucianism was his business; yet the layman somewhat understood the toil of passion, and aspired to seek the real truth. In the latter 780's he visited Master Shih T'ou; he forgot the words and comprehended the inner meaning. He also was a friend of Ch'an Master Tan Hsia (a successor of Shih T'ou).

One day Shih T'ou asked him, "Since you've seen me, how are your daily affairs?" He responded, "If you ask about my daily affairs, I have no way to open my mouth." He also presented a verse which said,

*In my daily affairs there's nothing different;  
Only I myself am in harmony.  
Nothing do I grasp or reject,  
Nowhere do I insist or turn away.*



*Who regards crimson and purple as honorable?  
The hills and mountains are void of any dust.  
Supernatural powers and their marvelous function—  
Fetching water and carrying firewood.*

Shih T'ou approved of this; he said, "Will you be a monk or a layman?" The layman said, "I want to follow my wish," and after all did not shave his head or wear the dark (garment of a monk).

Later he went to Kiangsi and asked Ma Tsu, "Who is he who is not the companion of myriad things?" Tsu said, "When you swallow all the water of the West River in one gulp, then I'll tell you." At these words the layman suddenly apprehended the abstruse essence; subsequently he stayed to learn for two years. He had a verse which said,

*I have a son who does not marry  
And a daughter who does not wed:  
The whole family gathered 'round,  
Together we speak birthless talk.*

Henceforth his eloquence was swift; he was heard of everywhere. . . . He had three hundred and more poems which circulated in the world.

## LIANG CHIEH of Tung Shan (806–869)

### CASE 43

(The following account is taken from *Wu Teng Hui Yuan* 13)

In youth he followed a teacher and recited the Perfection of Wisdom Heart Sutra; coming to where it says, 'There is no eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or mind,' he suddenly felt his face and asked the teacher, "I have eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and so forth; why does the sutra say there are none?" The teacher was surprised at this and said, "I am not your teacher." Then he directed him to go to Mt. Wu Hsieh (in Chekiang) to pay obeisance to Ch'an master (Ling) Mo (746–818; reckoned as one of Ma Tsu's successors, he was actually enlightened under Shih T'ou and was his attendant for twenty years), by whom he had his head shaved. At twenty-one he went to Sung Shan and received the precepts in full.

Travelling around, he first called on Nan Ch'uan; as it happened, it was the anniversary of Ma Tsu's death, so they were preparing a ceremonial feast. Ch'uan asked the community, "Tomorrow we will set out a feast for Ma Tsu; do you think Ma Tsu will come, or not?" No one replied; the master (Tung Shan) came forth and answered, "If he has a companion, he'll come." Ch'uan said, "Though this lad is young, he is quite suitable for carving and polishing." The master said, "Teacher, don't oppress a freeman (Liang, Tung Shan's personal name) and make him a slave." (The *Tsu T'ang Chi* says that after this he began to be known as an adept.)

Next he called on Kuei Shan and asked, "I recently have heard that the National Teacher Chung of Nan Yang had a saying about inanimate objects expounding the Dharma, but I have not thoroughly comprehended its subtlety." Kuei Shan said, "Do you not remember it?" The master said, "I remember." Kuei Shan said, "Try to recite it for me." The master then recited, "A monk asked, 'What is the mind of an ancient Buddha?' The National Teacher said, 'Walls, tiles, and pebbles.' The monk said, 'Aren't walls, tiles, and pebbles inanimate?' The National Teacher said, 'That's right.' The monk said, 'And can they expound the Dharma, or not?' The National Teacher said, 'They are always expounding it clearly, without interruption.' The monk said, 'Why don't I hear it?' The National Teacher said, 'You yourself don't hear it, but you shouldn't hinder the one who does hear it.' The monk said, 'Who can hear it?' The National Teacher said, 'All the saints can hear it.' The monk said, 'Can you hear it too, Master?' The National Teacher said, 'I don't hear it.' The monk said, 'Since you don't hear it, how do you know that inanimate objects can expound the Dharma?' The National Teacher said, 'It's lucky I don't hear it; if I heard it, then I'd be equal to the saints and you wouldn't hear me expound the Dharma.' The monk said, 'Then sentient beings have no part in it.' The National Teacher said, 'I explain for sentient beings, not for the saints.' The monk said, 'How are sentient beings after they have heard it?' The National Teacher said, 'Then they are not sentient beings.' The monk said, 'What scripture is the "inanimate expounding the Dharma" based on?' The National Teacher said, 'Obviously if the words do not accord with the classics, it is not the talk of a gentleman: you have not read how the Avatamsaka Sutra says,

"Lands expound it, sentient beings expound it, everything in the three times expounds it"?"

When the master had finished reciting, Kuei Shan said, "I too have something here, but a suitable man is hard to come across." The master said, "I'm still not clear, please point it out to me." Kuei Shan raised his whisk and said, "Do you understand?" The master said, "I don't understand. Please explain." Kuei Shan said, "The mouth born of my father and mother will never explain it to you." The master said, "Is there another who sought the Way in the same time as you?" Kuei Shan said, "From here go to Yu district in Li Leng, to where there is a row of stone grottoes; there is a man of the Way there, Yun Yen; if you can pull out the weeds to find his way, he will be of value to you." The master said, "How is this man?" Kuei Shan said, "He once asked me, 'When I want to serve you, how can I do so?' I told him, 'You must just absolutely cut off all leakage before you can.' He said, 'And would I be able to not go against your teaching or not?' I said, 'Above all, don't say that I'm here.'"

The master took leave of Kuei Shan and went right to Yun Yen; having quoted the preceding incident, he asked, "Who can hear inanimate objects expounding the Dharma?" Yun Yen said, "The inanimate can hear it." The master said, "Can you hear it, teacher?" Yun Yen said, "If I heard, you would not hear my expounding of the Dharma." The master said, "Why wouldn't I hear?" Yen raised his whisk and said, "Do you hear?" The master said, "No." Yen said, "You do not even hear my expounding of the Dharma; how could you hear the inanimate expounding the Dharma?" The master said, "What scripture contains the inanimate expounding the Dharma?" Yen said, "Haven't you read how the Amitabha Sutra says, 'Rivers, birds, trees, and forests all commemorate Buddha and Dharma.'"

At this the master had insight; thereupon he uttered a verse:

*How wonderful! How wonderful!*

*The inanimate expounding of Dharma is  
inconceivable;*

*If you use your ears to listen, you'll never  
understand—*

*Only when you hear in your eyes will you know.*

The master asked Yun Yen, "I have leftover habits which are not yet exhausted." Yun Yen said, "What have you ever done?" The master said, "I have not even practiced the holy truths." Yen said, "And do you rejoice, or not?" The master said, "I am not without joy; it is like finding a bright jewel in a dung-heap."

When he was about to go, he asked Yun Yen, "After your death, if someone should suddenly ask me if I can depict your true likeness, how shall I answer?" Yen remained silent for a good while, then said, "Just this is it." The master was sunk in contemplation; Yen said, "Reverend Chieh, now that you have taken up this matter, you must be very careful and thorough-going."

The master still had some doubt; later, as he was crossing a river, he saw his reflection and was greatly awakened to the inner meaning of what had happened before. He made a verse which said,

*Just avoid seeking from others,  
Or you will be far estranged from yourself.  
I now go on alone; I meet Him everywhere—  
He is now just I, but I now am not He:  
One must understand in this way  
In order to unite with thusness.*

From the end of the Ta Chung era (847–859) of T'ang, the master received and guided students at Hsin Feng Mountain; after this, he caused the teaching to flourish at Tung Mountain (Tung Shan) in Kao An in Yu Chiang (in Kiangsi). He provisionally opened up the five ranks, and skillfully handled the three potentials (high, middling, low); he greatly opened up the One Sound, and widely spread it through the myriad classes. He drew his precious sword sideways and cut off the forest of various views: his wondrous harmony spread widely, cutting off myriad rationalizations.

He also found Ts'ao Shan, who was deeply enlightened into the real essence, and wonderfully extolled the felicitous way, the harmony of the ways of lord and vassal, biased and true interdepending. Because of this the mystic breeze of the Tung succession spread throughout the land. Therefore, the masters of Ch'an everywhere all esteemed it and called it the Ts'ao-Tung Sect.

(Tung Shan had twenty-six successors; among them, Tao Ying of Yun Chu (d. 903) was one of the greatest masters of the time, who led a community of fifteen hundred people and produced twenty-eight enlightened disciples. Su Shan K'uang Jen (n.d.) was another distinguished successor to Tung Shan, with twenty enlightened disciples. The most enduring line of the Tung succession was that which came down through Yun Chu; he and Hsueh Feng, who is said to have called on Tung Shan nine times, were the foremost masters of their age in southeastern and southern China. The Ts'ao Tung sect trickled down in China until the seventeenth century; it was transmitted to Japan in the thirteenth century, over three hundred years after the founders, and still continues there in a modified form until present times.)

## WU YIN of Ho Shan (–960)

### CASE 44

(The following is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 17)

The master was a man from Fu Chou; his surname was Wu. At age seven he left home under the Great Master Hsueh Feng; when he came of age he was ordained.

The master travelled around till he come to Chün Yang and visited Chiu Feng. Feng permitted the master to enter his private room. One day Feng said to him, "You have come from far, far away to join the assembly. Have you seen any realm that can be cultivated? What shortcut can you get out by?" The master replied, "In the dark empty clearing, the blind are blind of themselves." At first Chiu Feng didn't approve: because of this the master discovered his intent and suddenly forgot his knowledge and views.

Previously the master had received an invitation to stay at Great Wisdom Temple on Ho Shan in Chi Chou (in Kiangsi). There students flocked around him. The master imparted ten booklets of admonitions which were received joyously all over. All said that Ho Shan was a suitable standard for the communities of monks.

Around this time the Li Clan (in power) south of the (Yangtse) River summoned the master. He was asked, "Where have you come from, Teacher?" The master said, "From Ho Shan."

"Where is the mountain?" The master said, "The man has come for an audience at the Imperial Palace, but the mountain has never moved." The Lord esteemed him and ordered him to dwell at Lucky Light Temple in Yang Chou. The master requested (to be allowed) to go back into the mountains.

In 960 the master showed a slight illness. He ordered his attendants to open up the abbot's quarters and assemble everyone there. He bade them farewell saying, "Hereafter students won't know Ho Shan: better get acquainted right now. Take care of yourselves!"

## MING CHAO TE CHIEN (n.d.)

### CASE 48

(The following account is from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 23)

He received the seal and testimonial of Lo Shan (a successor of Yen T'ou). He did not linger in one corner (but) powerfully extolled the mystic teaching. All the elders were in awe of his genius; there were rarely any latecoming students who dared to confront his 'swordpoint.'

When the master was in the great hall of Chao Ch'ing in Ch'uan Chou (in Fukien), he pointed to a wall painting and asked a monk, "What spirit is that?" (The monk) said, "The good spirit who guards the Dharma." The master said, "Where did it go at the time of the persecution?" The monk had no reply.

The master then had the monk go ask attendant Yen. Yen said, "In what aeon did you meet with this calamity?" The monk returned and quoted this to the master; the master said, "Even if attendant Yen later on gathers a following of a thousand people, what would be the use?" The monk then bowed and asked the master for an alternate saying; the master said, "Where did it go?"

Elder Ch'ing brought up the story of Yang Shan sticking the hoe in the ground and asked the master, "Was the Ancient's meaning where he folded his hands, or is the meaning where he stuck the hoe in the ground?" The master said, "Elder Ch'ing!" Ch'ing responded; the master said, "Have you ever seen Yang Shan even in a dream?" Ch'ing said, "I don't want a comment; I just want you to discuss it." The master said, "If you want discussion, there are fifteen hundred old teachers in the hall."

The master came to Shuang Yen; the elder of Shuang Yen observed the master's appearance, then said, "I will pose a question to ask you; if you can speak, then I will abandon this temple; if you cannot speak, then I won't abandon it. The Diamond Sutra says, 'All Buddhas and all the Buddhas' teachings come forth from this sutra.' Tell me, who expounds this sutra?" The master said, "Putting 'expounding' and 'not expounding' aside for the moment, just what do you call 'this sutra'?" Shuang Yen had no reply. The master cited the sutra, saying, "All wise ones and sages rely on the uncontrived way, yet there are distinctions; this is because the uncontrived way is the ultimate law—on what basis are there distinctions? But are distinctions faults or not? If they're faults, all wise ones and sages have faults; if they're not faults, just what is to be called 'distinctions'?" Shuang Yen again had nothing to say. The master said, "What Hsueh Feng said."

When the master was in Chih Che temple in Wu Chou (in Chekiang), he sat in the first seat (as a 'head monk'). He never would take clean water. The monk who was superintendent of affairs asked him, "Why are you not conscious of defilement, that you won't take clean water?" The master got down from the platform, picked up the pure water pitcher, and said, "This is pure." The superintendent said nothing; the master then broke the water pitcher. Henceforth the master's repute in the Way spread afar.

The congregation on Mt. Ming Chou (also in Wu Chou, Chekiang) asked him to abide there and open up the teaching. Ch'an folk from all quarters filled the halls and rooms.

Someone asked, "Who can face the smokeless fire?"

The master said, "One who isn't anxious for his eyebrows."

He asked, "Can you face it, Master?"

The master said, "Tell me, how many eyebrow hairs do I have left?"

A certain monk who had been in the master's audience took his leave and went to live in a hut for a year. Later he came back and paid obeisance; he said, "A man of old said 'If you haven't met for three days, do not look upon someone as before.'" The master then exposed his chest and said, "Tell me, how many hairs do I have on my chest?" The monk had no reply. The master then asked, "When did you leave your hut?" He said, "This morning." The master said, "When you came, to whom did you

give your broken-legged pot?" The monk again had nothing to say. The master then shouted him out.

(The master dwelt on Ming Chao for forty years, and 'his words were circulated everywhere.' He had five enlightened successors.)

## CH'UAN HUO of Yen T'ou (827–887)

CASES 51, 66

(Yen T'ou was a successor of Te Shan and "brother" of Hsueh Feng: see Cases 5, 21, and 51. The following account is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 16.)

The master was a man of Ch'uan Chou (in Hopei); his surname was K'o. In his youth he paid homage to Master Yi of (the district town) Ch'ing Yuan and had his head shaved. He went to Pao Shou Temple in (the capital) Ch'ang An and was ordained. He studied all the sections of the Sutras and Vinaya Texts.

Yen T'ou made the rounds of the Ch'an monasteries with Hsueh Feng I Ts'un and Ch'in Shan Wen Sui as his companions. From Mt. Ta Tz'u in Yü Hang he made his way to Lin Chi, but it was just after Lin Chi himself had died. Then he visited Yang Shan. As soon as he entered the gate, Yen T'ou picked up his sitting mat and said, "Teacher!" Yang Shan took his whisk and made as if to hold it up. T'ou said, "An undeniable expert."

Later Yen T'ou called on Te Shan: holding his sitting mat, he went into the Dharma Hall and looked up (at Te Shan). Te Shan said, "Well?" T'ou snorted at him. Shan said, "Where was my fault?" T'ou said, "A doubled case," then left the hall. Shan said, "This master looks a little like a foot-travelling man." The next day when Yen T'ou went up to inquire after him, Te Shan said, "Didn't you just arrive here yesterday, Reverend?" T'ou said, "That's right." Shan said, "Where did you learn this empty-headedness?" T'ou said, "I never deceive myself." Shan said, "After this you shouldn't turn your back on me." Another time Yen T'ou went to visit Te Shan: entering the abbot's quarters, T'ou contorted his body and asked, "Ordinary or sage?" Te Shan shouted, and Yen T'ou bowed in homage. (Further incidents involving Yen T'ou, Hsueh Feng and Te Shan are contained in the Commentary to Case 51.)



Yen T'ou said, "The intent of my teaching is like a poison-smeared drum: one beat and all who hear it, near and far, perish."

Later whenever anyone asked about Buddha, asked about Dharma, asked about Tao, or asked about Ch'an, Yen T'ou would always sigh.

During the 880's the central plain (i.e., the area around the capital, the heart of the realm) was infested with plundering armies: the master's congregation all fled the area. Yen T'ou himself (remained) sitting solemn and calm. One day bandits came in force. Accusing the master of not offering them any gifts, they slashed him with their blades. His countenance calm and collected, the master gave a loud shout, then died. The sound could be heard for several dozen miles.

## YUAN CHIH of Tao Wu Shan (768–835)

CASES 55, 89

(The following is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 14)

He was originally from Hai Hun in Yü Chang (modern Nan Ch'ang); his surname was Chang. At an early age he received instruction from Master Nie'h-p'an and was ordained. He joined Yao Shan's Dharma assembly and gained intimate accord with the Mind Seal. One day Yao Shan asked him, "Where are you coming from?" Tao Wu said, "From wandering in the mountains." Yao Shan said, "Speak quickly without leaving from this room." Tao Wu said, "The ravens on the mountain are white as snow; the fish swimming in the pond are hurrying ceaselessly."

Tao Wu and Yun Yen were attending Yao Shan. Yao Shan said, "Better not speak where your wisdom doesn't reach. If you do, then horns spout on your head. What about it, Ascetic Chih?" Tao Wu immediately left. Yun Yen asked Yao Shan, "Why did Elder Brother Chih not answer you, Teacher?" Yao Shan said, "I have a back ache today—(despite his leaving,) he does understand: go ask him." Yun Yen immediately went and asked Tao Wu, "Why didn't you reply to our Teacher, Elder Brother?" Tao Wu said, "Go back and ask our Teacher."

When Yun Yen was about to die, he sent someone to deliver his farewell letter to Tao Wu. Tao Wu opened it, glanced through

it and said, "Yun Yen knows no shame: I shouldn't have spoken to him that time. Nevertheless, in essence he was a (faithful) 'son' who didn't go against Yao Shan."

Yun Yen asked, "What is your family style, Elder Brother?" Tao Wu said, "What would be the use of having you point it out?"

(Ho was asked,) "What is the place to apply effort in these times?" Tao Wu said, "If a thousand people call you, and you don't turn your head, only then will you have some small portion (of attainment)."

He was asked, "What is your family style, Teacher?" Tao Wu got down from the meditation seat and curtseyed saying, "Thanks for coming from so far away."

In 835 Tao Wu showed sickness: he was in pain. The monks of his congregation came to offer condolences and inquire about his health. Tao Wu said, "There is an experience which is not repaid: do you realize that?" The congregation were all sorrowful. When he was about to go, Tao Wu said to them. "I am crossing over to the west, but Principle has no eastward movement." As he finished speaking, he showed the stillness of death.

## CH'ING CHU of Shih Shuang Shan

(807–889)

CASES 55, 91

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 15)

He was originally from Hsin Kan in Lu Ling (in Kiangsi); his surname was Ch'en. At age thirteen he had his head shaved by Ch'an Master Shao Luan; at twenty-three he was fully ordained on (the holy mountain) Sung Yueh.

The master came to the Dharma assembly on Mt. Kuei: there he served as the rice steward. One day he was in the rice room sieving rice, when Kuei Shan said to him, "You shouldn't throw away what the donor gave us." Shih Shuang said, "I'm not throwing anything away." Kuei Shan picked up a grain of rice off the floor and said, "You said you didn't throw anything away: where did this come from?" Shih Shuang had no reply. Kuei Shan also said, "Don't slight this one grain of rice: a

hundred thousand grains are born from this one grain." Shih Shuang said, "A hundred thousand grains arise from this one grain, but where does this one grain come from?" Kuei Shan laughed loudly and returned to his abbot's quarters. That night he went up to the hall and said, "(Attention) everybody! There's a worm in the rice."

Later Shih Shuang studied with Tao Wu. He asked, "What is enlightenment right before the eyes?" Tao Wu called to a novice, and the novice responded. Wu said, "Fill the water pitcher." Wu then asked Shih Shuang, "What did you just ask?" Shuang then repeated his question. Wu immediately got up and left. From this Shuang had an awakening. Tao Wu said, "I'm sick: I am about to leave the world. I have something on my mind that has been bothering me for a long time—who can clear it up?" Shuang said, "Mind and things are both wrong; trying to clear them away increases the affliction." Tao Wu said, "How sage!"

In order to shun the world, the master mixed with lay people in the Liu Yang Pottery works in Ch'ang Sha. In the mornings he wandered, in the evenings he rested. No one could become acquainted with him. Later, because Tung Shan Liang Chieh sent a monk to search him out, his talents began to be revealed, and he was chosen to reside on Shih Shuang Shan ("Stone Frost Mountain.") Later when Tao Wu was about to abandon his congregation and die, he considered Shih Shuang his true successor, and personally went to Shih Shuang to be near him. Shih Shuang served him scrupulously, with all the etiquette due a teacher. After a while Tao Wu died, and disciples flocked to Shih Shuang, forming a congregation of five hundred.

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of the coming from the West?" The master said, "A piece of rock in empty space." When the monk bowed, the master said, "Do you understand?" The monk said, "I don't understand." The master said, "Luckily you don't understand. If you did it would have smashed your head."

The master stayed at Shih Shuang for twenty years' time. His students always sat, they never lay down. All over the country they were known as the "dead tree congregation." The T'ang emperor Hsi Tsung heard of the fame of the master's Path and sent emissaries to bestow purple robes on him. The

master steadfastly refused to accept them. In 889 he showed sickness and died at the age of eighty-two; he had been a monk for fifty-nine years.

## WEN SUI of Ch'in Shan

### CASE 56

(The following is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 17)

The master was originally from Fu Chou. While still young he was ordained by Ch'an Master Huan Chung at the Temple of Great Compassion in Hang Chou. At the time Yen T'ou and Hsueh Feng were in the congregation: when they saw Ch'in Shan express his opinions, they knew he was a vessel of the Dharma. They took him along with them as they went traveling. The affinities of these two worthies meshed with Te Shan: each received his seal; but though Ch'in Shan was aroused many times, in the end he was still frozen and stuck. One day he asked Te Shan, "T'ien Huang spoke this way; Lung T'an spoke this way; (Lung T'an was Te Shan's master; T'ien Huang was Lung T'an's) I wonder, how does Te Shan speak?" Te Shan said, "Try to cite what T'ien Huang and Lung T'an said." As Ch'in Shan was about to put forward some words, Te Shan herded him into the Nirvana Hall (i.e., the infirmary). Ch'in Shan said, "You may be right, but you beat me too much."

Later Ch'in Shan awoke at Tung Shan's words: hence he was Tung Shan's successor. At age twenty-seven he settled at Ch'in Shan. To his congregation he related that when he first visited Tung Shan, Tung Shan asked, "Where did you come here from?" The master said, "From Great Compassion." Tung Shan said, "And did you see the master of Great Compassion?" The master said, "I did." Tung Shan said, "Did you see him before form or after form?" The master said, "It was not seeing before or after." Tung Shan was silent, so the master then said, "Having left my master too soon, I didn't get to the bottom of his meaning."

A monk asked, "What is the meaning of the coming from the West?" Ch'in Shan said, "The Lord of Liang's (Emperor Wu's) T-square, Master Chih's cutting knife."

A monk asked, "What is your family style, Teacher?" The master said, "Brocade curtains and a silver incense box: when

the wind blows, the whole road is filled with perfume." Another monk asked, "How do you teach people, Teacher?" The master said, "If I taught people, I'd be the same as you lot." The monk said, "I've come especially to visit you, Teacher: you should reveal the style of the sect. The master said, "If you came specially, I'll have to." The monk said, "Please do." The master then struck him. The monk was speechless. Ch'in Shan said, "You're guarding a stump, waiting for a rabbit,\* falsely using your mental spirit."

\* A man who happened to see a rabbit collide with a tree stump and drop down dead foolishly sticks by the stump, waiting for it to "catch" another rabbit.

## MAHASATTVA FU (497-569)

### CASE 67

Mahasattva Fu, also called Shan Hui, was a layman and a small farmer; in his middle twenties he retired to a mountain with his wife and two children, where he worked during the day and practiced the Way at night. In the course of time he gave up all of his possessions three times, sold his wife and children, and hired himself out as a laborer, spending the proceeds to feed the poor and hungry. Throughout his life he continued to work, assisted by his family (who, out of respect for the Mahasattva, were not actually enslaved by their purchasers) and disciples; he fasted and gave the food saved thereby to the needy. The time during which he lived was especially bitter for great masses of peasants, and Mahasattva Fu is exemplary for his continued generosity in almsgiving, not only of Dharma, but also of material goods. He went into the capital of Liang several times to preach, hoping to spread the Dharma more widely than was possible from his mountain abode. The following is a summary of three levels of goodness, to which Fu enjoined Emperor Wu of Liang in his first letter to the monarch:

*The highest good has an empty heart as its basis,  
and non-attachment as its source; abolishment of  
formality is the cause, and nirvana is the result.*

*The middling good has government of oneself as its basis, and government of the nation as its source; the fruits experienced by gods and humans will be peace and happiness.*

*The least good is to protect and nourish living beings,  
to overcome cruelty and abolish murder, and to have all  
the farmers receive free food six times a month.*

Mahasattva Fu was thought to be a manifestation of Maitreya, the future Buddha.

## CHIH CH'ANG of Kuei Tsung Temple

### CASE 69

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7)

The master went up into the Hall and said, "The ancient worthies of antiquity were not without knowledge. Those most high great men were not the same as the common sort. Right now, if you can't establish yourself independently, you're wasting your time. All of you: don't misuse your minds—there's no one to take your place, nor is there any way for you to use your minds. Don't go to others to seek. Since you've always just relied on others to understand, when they spoke you always got stuck. The fact that your light doesn't penetrate through is just because there are things before your eyes."

A monk asked, "What is the hidden meaning?" The master said, "There is no one who can understand." "What is turning towards it?" The master said, "If there is turning towards, this immediately goes against it." "What is not turning towards it?" The master said, "Who is looking for the hidden meaning?" He also said, "Go away! There's no place for you to use your mind." The monk said, "How is it you have no expedient means to enable this student to gain entry?" The master said, "The Sound-Seer's \* wondrous wisdom-power can save you from the suffering of the world." "What is Kuanyin's wondrous wisdom-power?" asked the monk. The master knocked three times on the lid of the three-legged cauldron and said, "Do you hear that or not?" The monk said he did hear. The master said,

"Why didn't I hear it?" The monk was speechless, so the master drove him out with blows of his staff.

Yun Yen came calling. The master made the motions of drawing a bow. Yun Yen, after a pause, made the gesture of drawing a sword. The master said, "Too late."

The master went up into the Hall and said, "Today I'm going to talk Ch'an: all of you come closer." Everyone approached, and the master said, "Listen to Kuanyin's conduct, responding well in all the various places." A monk asked, "What is Kuanyin's conduct?" The master then snapped his fingers and said, "Do all of you hear or not?" The monks said, "We hear." The master said, "What is this bunch of guys looking for here?" and drove them out with blows. Laughing loudly, he returned to his abbot's quarters.

\* "Sound-Seer" is a translation of the name of Kuanyin, the bodhisattva of unlimited compassion, who "observes the sounds of the world."

## CH'ANG KUAN of Wu Feng (n.d.)

CASE 70, 71

(Wu Feng was one of Pai Chang's successors; the following is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 9:)

There was a monk who asked, "What is the scenery (or: perspective) of Wu Feng?" The master said, "Dangerous." The monk asked, "What is the man within the scene?" The master said, "A block."

The master said to a monk who was taking leave of him, "Where are you going, Reverend?" The monk said, "I'm going to Mt. T'ai." The master raised one finger and said, "If you see Manjusri, return here and I'll meet with you." (Traditionally, Mt. T'ien T'ai was an abode of Manjusri.) The monk had no reply.

The master asked a monk, "Have you seen the ox?" The monk said he had seen it. The master said, "Did you see the left horn or the right horn?" The monk had no reply. The master answered himself on his behalf, "I saw that there was no left or right."

Another monk was taking leave of the master, who said to him, "When you go all over, don't slander me (by saying that) I am here." The monk said, "I won't say you're here." The master said, "Where would you say I am?" The monk held up one finger. The master said, "You have already slandered me."

## T'AN SHENG of Yun Yen (781–841)

CASE 72, 89

(The following is from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 14:)

He was from Chien Ch'ang in Chung Ling; his surname was Wang. At an early age he left home. At first he studied under Ch'an Master Hai of Pai Chang, but he did not awaken to his mystic meaning. After he had served Pai Chang for around twenty years, Pai Chang died so Yun Yen visited Yao Shan and reached understanding there at his words. . . . Later the master dwelt at Yun Yen Shan ("Cloud Cliff Mountain") in T'an Chou (in Hunan).

One day Yun Yen told the assembly, "There's a son of someone's family—when questioned, there is nothing he cannot explain." Tung Shan asked, "How many scriptures were there in his house?" The master said, "Not even a single word." "Then how did he get so much knowledge?" The master said, "Day and night he never slept." "Could I still ask him about something?" The master said, "If he could say, he wouldn't say."

Once when Yun Yen was sweeping the floor, Kuei Shan said to him, "Too busy!" The master said, "You should know that there's one who isn't busy." Kuei Shan said, "If so, then there's a second moon." The master held up his broom and said "Which moon is this?" Kuei Shan lowered his head and left. When Hsuan Sha heard of this he said, "Precisely the second moon."

Once when Yun Yen was making shoes, Tung Shan asked, "If I come to you, Master, and ask for eyes, I wonder, will I get them or not?" Yun Yen said, "Who did you give yours to?" Tung Shan said, "I haven't got any." The master said, "If you had, where would you put them?" Tung Shan was speechless. The master said, "Is the one asking for eyes an eye or not?" Tung Shan said, "He's not an eye." The master scoffed at him.

In 841 in the tenth month the master showed illness. On the twenty-sixth, after he had washed, he called the Superinten-



dent Monk and ordered him to prepare a feast. On the twenty-seventh when evening came the master returned to quiescence.

## CHIH TSANG of Hsi T'ang (734–814)

### CASE 73

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7:)

The master was originally from Ch'ien Hua; his surname was Liao. From age eight he followed a teacher; at twenty-five he was fully ordained. Someone who met him noticed his special appearance and said to him, "Your mettle is not commonplace: you ought to be the Dharma King's helper." So the master went to Buddha's Footprint Range to visit Ma Tsu and pay his respects. There he entered Ma Tsu's room along with Ch'an Master Hai of Pai Chang; both received Ma Tsu's seal.

One day Ma Tsu sent the master to Ch'ang An to present a book to National Teacher Chung. The National Teacher asked, "What Dharma does your master expound?" Hsi T'ang crossed from east to west and stood there. The National Teacher said, "What else is there besides just this?" The master recrossed to the east and stood there. The National Teacher said, "This is Ma Tsu's; what about you, good man?" The master said, "There's already been a showing for you, Teacher."

Hsi T'ang returned to his native district: he had received Ma Tsu's patched robe. . . . One day Ma Tsu asked him, "Why don't you read sutras?" The master said, "Could sutras be any different (from this)?" Ma Tsu said, "Though this is so, later on you'll still have to help people." The master said, "I am sick and want to heal myself: how could I dare to speak for others?" Ma Tsu said, "In your last years you will inevitably (cause the Dharma to) flourish in the world." After Ma Tsu had died, the congregation in 791 asked the master to open the hall (and teach).

Hsi T'ang died in 814 at the age of 80: he had been a monk for fifty-five years. (Two T'ang emperors,) Hsien Tsung and Mu Tsung bestowed posthumous titles on him.

## TING CHOU SHIH TSANG (714–800)

(The record says he was entombed in a memorial tower in 800, but it is not clear just when he died.)

## CASE 75

(No biography of this master is recorded in the sectarian Ch'an histories; the information given here is taken from the *Sung Kao Seng Chuan*, 10.)

When young, the master studied Confucianism; later he entered the Buddhist order, and went to study under the renowned P'u Chi (who was known as the Seventh Patriarch in the northern Ch'an tradition; his master had been Shen Hsiu, one of the Fifth Patriarch Hung Jen's ten great disciples). There he was enlightened in Ch'an; later he came to Great Elephant Peak in the mountains of central China, where he sat alone peacefully in deep nirvanic stillness for several years. Students came seeking him out and gathered around him; eventually Li T'ao Ying, military commander of Hui Cou and member of the imperial clan, ordered him to come to the city; but Shih Tsang refused, saying that his rustic nature was impossible to bridle, and he couldn't be bothered with rules of etiquette. Li then climbed the mountain himself to talk to the Master; afterwards, he petitioned the throne to grant a title to Shih Tsang's abode, but Shih Tsang had already taken leave of his disciples, and passed on the next day.

The master Wu Chiu ('Crow's Nest'), who figures in case 75, is obscure, but it seems he was a successor of Ma Tsu (709–788).

## T'IEN JAN of Tan Hsia (738–824)

## CASE 76

(A successor to Shih T'ou, Tan Hsia was the "father" of Ts'ui Wei and thus the "grandfather" of T'ou Tzu. The following is related in the *Ching Te Ch'uan Ten Lu* 14:)

It is not known what locality the master was from. At first he studied Confucianism, intending to go to Ch'ang An to take part in the imperial examinations. (What happened to him on the road that made him turn to Buddhism, as well as the circumstances of his meeting with Ma Tsu and Shih T'ou, is told

by Yuan Wu in Case 76.) After he returned to Ma Tsu's after having his head shaved by Shih T'ou, Ma Tsu asked, "Where did you come here from?" Tan Hsia said, "Shih T'ou." Ma Tsu said, "Shih T'ou's road is slippery: did he trip you up?" The master said, "If he had, I wouldn't have come."

Next the master went travelling to look over the various localities (where Ch'an flourished). For three years he lived on Mt. T'ien T'ai's Flower Top Peak. He went to Hang Chou's Ching Shan and payed his respects to Ch'an Master Kuo I. In the middle of the Yuan Ho years (806–821) he went to the Dragon Gate (Mountain's) Fragrant Mountain near Loyang, where he and Master Fu Niu were faithful friends. . . . He also visited National Teacher Chung. . . .

(One day during the year) 809 the master stretched out on T'ien Chin Bridge. When the governor, Lord Cheng, appeared, the master reviled him and didn't get up. One of the governor's attendants asked him his reason for doing this. The master took his time about answering and said, "(Because I am) an unconcerned monk." The governor considered him extraordinary and offered him clothes and daily provisions of food. In the spring of his fifteenth year (in Loyang) the master announced to his disciples, "I've been thinking of a place with forests and streams in which to die." Soon his disciples had a geomancer (pick a site for) a hermitage to be built on Tan Hsia Mountain in Nan Yang. Within three years time (after the master had taken up residence there) students of the mystery had gathered, forming a congregation of three hundred, so they built a monastery.

## WEI YEN of Yao Shan (750–834)

### CASE 81

(Yeo Shan was a successor to Shih T'ou and the ancestor of the Ts'ao-Tung School. The following comes from the *Te Ching Ch'uan Teng Lu* 14:)

Ch'an Master Wei Yen of Yao Shan in Li Chou (in Hunan) was a man from Chiang Chou (in Shansi); his surname was Han. He left home at age seventeen and was ordained in 774 on Heng Yueh by the Vinaya Master Hsi Ts'ao.

As soon as he visited Shih T'ou, the master intimately comprehended his esoteric message. One day as the master was sitting, Shih T'ou saw him and asked, "What are you doing here?"

The master said, "I'm not doing anything at all." Shih T'ou said, "If so then you're sitting idly." The master said, "If I were sitting idly, that would be doing something." Shih T'ou said, "You speak of not doing: not doing what?" The master said, "Even the thousand sages do not know." Shih T'ou praised him with a verse:

*Since we've lived together I haven't known your  
name.*

*Doing as you please, acting this way, bringing me  
along—*

*Even the sages of high antiquity don't know:  
How could the hurried common type be able to  
understand.*

Shih T'ou once said, "Speech and action have nothing to do with it." The master said, "Not speaking and non-action don't have anything to do with it either." Shih T'ou said, "Here, not even a needle can enter." The master said, "Here, it's like growing flowers on stone." Shih T'ou approved of him. Later the master dwelt on Yao Shan in Li Chou: an oceanlike congregation gathered.

A monk asked, "How can one not be confused by all phenomena?" The master said, "If you go along with them, how can they obstruct you?" The monk said, "I don't understand." The master said, "What phenomena are confusing you?"

A monk asked, "What is *nirvana*?" The master said, "What did you call it before you opened your mouth?"

A monk asked, "I have not yet understood my own thing: please, Teacher, point it out to me." After a silence the master said, "It wouldn't be hard for me to say something for you right now: it would only be proper if you immediately saw at my words—then you'd have gotten somewhere. But if you kept on entering into calculating thought, it would become my fault. It's not as good as both of us shutting up to avoid entangling each other."

As Yao Shan was about to die he cried out, "The Dharma Hall is collapsing! The Dharma Hall is collapsing! Everybody prop it up!" Then he raised his hand and said, "You disciples don't understand my meaning," and died.

# CH'IAN of Yen Kuan (District's) Chen Kuo Hai Ch'ang Temple

## CASE 91

(The following is taken from the *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 7:)

Yen Kuan was originally from Hai Men District (in Che-kiang); his surname was Li. When he was born a spiritual light filled the room. Also, there was a strange monk who told him, "Will you not be the one who will establish the supreme banner and make the Buddha-sun shine back?" So he had his head shaved and was ordained by Ch'an Master Yun Tsung of his native district. Later he heard that Ma Tsu was teaching on Kung Kung Mountain, so he took his staff and went to visit him there. Yen Kuan had an extraordinary appearance: as soon as Ma Tsu saw him he considered him a profound vessel, so he ordered him to come into his room and intimately instructed him in the Correct Dharma.

A monk asked Yen Kuan, "What is one's own Vairocana Buddha?" The master said, "Bring me that brass pitcher." The monk then brought the pitcher over. The master said, "Take it back and put it where it was." Having returned the pitcher to its place, this monk came back to ask again about his previous question. Yen Kuan said, "The ancient Buddha is indeed long gone!"

A lecturing monk came calling. The master asked him, "What is your work?" The lecturer said, "I lecture on the Hua Yen sutra." The master said, "How many kinds of dharma worlds are there in the sutra?" The lecturer answered, "To explain fully, there are many many, without end; to explain briefly, there are four kinds." The master held up his whisk and said, "Which kind of dharma world is this?" The lecturer sank into thought as he slowly pondered his reply. The master said, "To know by pondering, to understand by thinking it over—this is the way ghosts make their living. Sure enough, the lone lamp beneath the sun loses its glow."

A monk asked Ta Mei, "What is the meaning of the coming from the West?" Ta Mei said, "The coming from the West has no meaning." When Yen Kuan heard of this he said, "One coffin, two corpses."

Later, without illness, Yen Kuan sat peacefully and died.

## CHÜ HUI of Ta Kuang (836–903)

## CASE 93

(The following is taken from the account in the *Ching Te Ch'u'an Teng Lu* 16:)

The master was a man from the capital district (Ch'ang An); his surname was Wang.

When he first visited the room of Shih Shuang (his master) he passed two years staying close by, asking for instruction. He was ordered to take charge of the North Stupa. With clothes of hemp and shoes of straw, he was on the verge of forgetting his body and consciousness. One day Shih Shuang, intending to test what Ta Kuang had attained, questioned him saying, "Every year the country sends its chosen candidates to compete in the examinations: do they get posts at court or not?" The master said, "There are people who do not seek advancement." Shih Shuang said, "Why?" The master said, "Because they do not act for the sake of fame." While he was ill, Shih Shuang again questioned the master, "Is there any other time besides Today?" The master said, "I don't even say Today is right." Shih Shuang approved of him very much. . . . The master stayed in the vicinity (of Shih Shuang) for over twenty years.

The benefactor of Buddhism, Lord Hu of Liu Yang (in Hunan), invited the master to reside on Mt. Ta Kuang, in order to propagate the teachings of the sect.

There was a monk who asked, "As for Bodhidharma, was he a Patriarch or not?" Ta Kuang said, "He wasn't a Patriarch." The monk said, "Since he wasn't a Patriarch, what did he come for?" The master said, "Because you wouldn't comprehend a Patriarch." The monk asked, "What's it like after comprehending?" The master said, "You finally know he wasn't a Patriarch."

The master was asked, "What was it like during the primordial chaos, before differentiation?" The master said, "Who can relate the Teachings of the Age?" The master also said, "The Teachings of the Age were just to straighten out the people of the age. Even if you can cut all the way through them, this is just becoming a person who has finished his task. You shouldn't then take this as the business of patchrobed ones." Thus it is said, "In forty-nine years Buddha couldn't explain it fully; in forty-nine years he couldn't wrap it all up." Whenever Ta Kuang taught students it was generally like this.

# SSU MING of Hsi Yuan in Ju Chou (in Honan) (n.d.)

## CASE 98

(Ssu Ming succeeded to Master Chao of Pao Chou, a disciple of Lin Chi; he had one successor. The following dialogues are taken from *Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu* 12:)

Someone asked, "What is a monastery?"

The master said, "A forest of thorns."

He asked, "What is the man in the monastery?"

The master said, "A boar; a badger."

Someone asked, "What is the one shout of Lin Chi?"

The master said, "A thirty-thousand-pound catapult is not shot at a rat."

He said, "Where is the master's compassion?"

The master hit him.

Tsung I of T'ien P'ing Mountain, also in Honan, who also appears in case 98, has no separate record in any of the classical histories; he was a successor of Ch'ing Ch'i Hung Chin, a disciple of Lo Han Kuei Ch'en and former travelling companion of Fa Yen Wen I.

# Traditional Teaching Devices

## THE THREE ROADS OF TUNG SHAN

(The following explanation is taken from Shigetsu Ein's *Funogo san ro, da, shi i rui*, a 'Non-talk on the three roads, (three) falls, and four different kinds' (1761). Shigetsu was a Soto Zen master, a Japanese descendant of Ts'ao-Tung Ch'an.)

For innumerable aeons, since there has been self, this stinking skinbag has been changed from time to time, transformed from place to place, in a thousand conditions, ten thousand forms; who can reach the realm of our fundamental quiescence?

If you get here, you must know this road. 'This road' means while dwelling in the present heap of sound and form, first getting rid of clinging to self, and attaining our former original state of selflessness. And furthermore, you must know that all things have no self. Once person and things are selfless, in your daily activities you walk in the void. This life basically has an undefiled practice and experience; thus would we practice and experience nondefilement. Today you must diligently walk in the void. Walking in the void is not some special art; each day when you go into the hall, you should not chew through a single grain of rice. Not chewing through a single grain of rice means that there is no breaking of the fast or violation of discipline by arousing mindfulness of tasting flavor. This is called traveling the bird's path.

Travel on the bird's path is trackless; when you don't leave your body in the realm of tracklessness, this is the turning point of an ascetic. After you have arrived here and settled here, there is still one road going beyond. This road is not in going or coming; it is what is called 'moss growing in the jade palace.' All the names of the Other Side are temporary names for this. In reality, it is the one road that cannot be touched upon. That is why we say 'hidden.' And 'hidden' is not a matter of giving a name as its meaning; the realm called the hidden road is the realm of no name or meaning. This is why it is said, 'He has no country; he does not abide, dwells in no home.'



To know this and yet be able to not remain here, to be an example for beings, to inspire and lead them, unify and teach them, is called 'extending the hands.' In extending the hands, there is no separate road; it does not transgress the bird's path. Traveling the bird's path by yourself, yet you extend your hands. In the bird's path there is no separate road; knowing the hidden road yourself, you still don't transgress it. Dwelling in the bird's path, you don't sprout horns on your head but always extend your hands.

Thus the three roads are the cause and effect of the great practice; and the cause and effect spreads vast and wide throughout the whole universe.

### THREE KINDS OF FALL

(The following sayings are attributed to Ts'ao Shan Pen Chi, a great desciple of Tung Shan, also known as the Former Ts'ao Shan; the remarks in parenthesis may be those of Ts'ao Shan Liao Wu, known as Great Master Hui Hsia, a successor of Pen Chi, known as the second generation Ts'ao Shan. There is a certain amount of confusion as to the authorship of some early Ts'ao-Tung works, but this is totally irrelevant to our purpose.)

An ascetic taking food has three kinds of fall: being a water buffalo is the fall of an ascetic; not accepting food is the fall of the precious; not cutting off sound and form is the fall according to kind. Just fall; whose business is this?

(If you want to know, this is going in among different kinds, not approving the business of asceticism, purification, and tranquilization. Therefore the Ancients provisionally used the water buffalo to represent different kinds. But these are different kinds in terms of phenomena, not speech.)

As for different kinds of speech, all speech back and forth is of a kind; that is why Nan Ch'uan said, "Where knowledge cannot reach, just don't speak of it; if you speak of it, then horns will grow on your head. Even if you call it 'thus,' already it has changed. You should just go work among different kinds of beings." Right now you must go into differentiation and speak of the phenomena in differentiation; only when there are no words in your words will you be able to do so. When Nan Ch'uan was ailing, someone asked, "Master, after you die,

where will you go?" Ch'uan said, "I'll be a water buffalo at the house of the patron down the mountain." His questioner said, "I want to accompany you, master, but can I?" Ch'uan said, "If you follow me, come with a blade of grass in your mouth."

(These are words of an ascetic transforming himself; therefore he says, 'If you want to approach, come with a blade of grass in your mouth.' To approach intimately is called 'Only nonattachment is worthy of offering.')

He also said, "As for the fall according to kind, right now in the midst of all sounds and forms, to turn oneself around on everything and not fall into gradations is called falling according to kind."

He also said, "As for the fall of the precious, the body of reality and nature of reality are precious things; they too must be turned around—this is the fall of the precious. Right now, the White Ox on Open Ground is the ultimate model of the body of reality; it too must be turned around, so that one may avoid sitting in the region of uniformity with no discrimination. This is also called the business of cutting off offering. If you want to use offerings, you must obtain this food. Thus it is called flavorless flavor, and it is called nonattachment being worthy of offering. All the rest is defiled food; it is not the food of nonattached liberation. Someone asked Pai Chang, 'What is used for food?' Pai Chang said, 'Nonattachment is used for food.' Yun Yen said, 'Do not use flavor for offerings.' Tao Wu said, 'Knowing there exists something to maintain, all is offering.'"

Those who take food from correct livelihood must have all three kinds of fall.

At the time, a monk asked, "Wearing fur and horns—what fall is this? Not accepting food—what fall is this? Not cutting off sound and form—what fall is this?" I said, "Wearing fur and horns is the fall of the ascetic. Not cutting off sound and form is the fall according to kind. Not accepting food is the fall of the precious—this is the fundamental thing; one knows it exists, yet does not grasp it, so it is said, 'fall of the precious.' As for wearing fur and horns, the fall of an ascetic, this is not clinging to the business of asceticism, nor to the states of rewards of all saints. As for not cutting off sound and form, the fall according to kind, because a beginner knows he has his own fundamental thing, when he turns back the light he gets rid of all form,

sound, smell, flavor, feel, and ideas, and attains stillness. Thus after he perfects this accomplishment, he does not cling to the six sense fields; falling among them, he is not befuddled, going along with them without hindrance. Therefore it is said, 'The six teachers of outside paths are your teachers; when those teachers fall, you also fall along with them, and thereby can eat.' The food is the food of right livelihood; it is also the fundamental thing. It is just that not being defiled by the perceptive awareness in your six senses is called 'falling'—it is not the same as former fears. One does not even grasp his own concern, the fundamental thing, much less anything else."

#### THE FIVE STATES OF LORD AND VASSAL

(The germ of the five states—or positions, ranks—is in the *Ts'an T'ung Ch'i*, 'Merging of Difference and Identity,' written by Shih T'ou (700–790), ancestor of the Ts'ao-Tung house. Tung Shan exposed the five states in his *Pao Ching San Mei Ke*, 'Song of the Jewel Mirror Meditation,' and composed a set of poems on the five states of the interrelation of the true/absolute and biased/relative. Ts'ao Shan, who seems to have used the five ranks more than Tung Shan's other disciples, had been a scholar of Confucianism until the age of nineteen and expressed the five states in terms of lord and vassal, or prince and minister. The following is Ts'ao Shan's explanation.)

The absolute state is the realm of emptiness, where there has never been a single thing; the relative state is the realm of form, with myriad forms. The relative within the absolute is turning away from principle and going to phenomena; the absolute within the relative is indifference to phenomena, entering principle. Mutual integration is subtly responding to myriad circumstances without falling into various existences. It is not defiled, not pure, not true, not biased; therefore it is called the empty mysterious great way, the non-grasping true source. The past worthies since time immemorial have esteemed this rank (state of integration) as the most wondrous and most mysterious. You must discern it clearly and thoroughly. The lord is the absolute state, the vassal is the relative state. The vassal turning towards the lord is the absolute within the relative; the lord looking upon the vassal is the

relative within the absolute. The way of lord and vassal in harmony is an expression of mutual integration.

A monk asked, "What is the lord like?"

The master said, "His wondrous virtue is honored throughout the world; his lofty illumination shines through the great void."

"What is the vassal like?"

"His spiritual activity spreads the holy way; true wisdom benefits living beings."

"What is the vassal turning towards the lord?"

"Without falling into various dispositions, freeing his feelings he gazes upon the holy countenance."

"What is the lord looking at the vassal?"

"Although his wondrous countenance doesn't move, the shining of his light is fundamentally without bias."

"What is the way of lord and vassal in harmony?"

"Comingling, without inside or outside; merging harmoniously, with upper and lower equal."

#### FEN YANG ON THE FIVE STATES

(Fen Yang Shan Chao, 947–1024, was one of the great ancestors of the Lin Chi house of Ch'an, noteworthy for his development of the *kung an* as a tool in Ch'an study; one of his points was to show the unity of the essence of Ch'an in the midst of the various methods which had evolved in the streams of Ch'an teaching over the preceding three hundred years.)

Coming from within the absolute

*The jewel sword of the diamond king  
Sweeps the skies with a spiritual light;  
It shines freely throughout the world, like a crystal,  
Its clear radiance free of dust.*

The relative within the absolute (biased within the true)

*The thunderous roar of cutting dynamism—  
To watch for the sparks and lightning  
Is still dull thinking;  
Hesitate and you are a thousand mountains away.*

The absolute within the relative (true within the biased)

*See the wheel-turning king;  
Enforcing the true imperative, with seven regal  
treasures and a thousand sons.  
Everything accompanies him on the road,  
Still he seeks a golden mirror.*

Arriving in both (in old tradition, this is arriving in the relative/biased)

*A three year old golden lion;  
His teeth and claws are all there—  
All demons and apparitions  
Faint at the sound of his roar.*

Simultaneous realization of both

*Great glory is effortless;  
Quit making a wooden ox walk.  
The real one goes through the fire—  
The wonder of wonders of the King of Dharma.*

Coming from within the absolute is lotus flowers blooming on parched ground—their golden calyxes and silver stems are bathed in jade dewdrops. The eminent monk does not sit on the phoenix pedestal. The relative within the absolute—the moon is bright at midnight, the sun must greet the dawn. The absolute within the relative—a hair tip becomes a huge tree, a drop of water becomes a river. Arriving in both—spirit does not come from heaven or earth; how can heroism depend on the four seasons for its impulse? Simultaneous realization—the jade woman casts the shuttle on the whirring loom, the stone man beats the drum, boom boom.

#### FEN YANG'S EIGHTEEN TYPES OF QUESTIONS

(This list is taken from the *Jen T'ien Yen Mu*, 'Eye of Humans and Gods,' and it seems that the examples given are not necessarily chosen by Fen Yang Shan Chao himself.)

*asking for instruction*—a monk asked Ma Tsu, "What is Buddha?" Ma Tsu said, "Mind is Buddha." Chao Chou said, "The one in the shrine."

*presenting one's understanding*—a monk asked Lung Ya, "How is it when 'sky cannot cover, earth cannot hold?'" Lung Ya said, "People of the way should be like this."

*investigating and discerning*—someone asked Lin Chi, "The student has a question; how is it when it is on the part of the teacher?" Lin Chi said, "Say it quickly! Tell me right away!" As the student hesitated to speak, Lin Chi struck him.

*meeting of minds*—a monk asked T'ien Huang, "What about when the feeling of doubt has not subsided?" T'ien Huang said, "Sticking to one is not real."

*wrapping up (focusing)*—a monk asked Pa Chiao, "The whole earth is an eye; I ask the teacher's guidance." Pa Chiao said, "A poor man comes upon a feast."

*mental activity*—a monk asked Hsing Hua, "I cannot distinguish black from white; I ask the teacher to help me." Hua hit him as he spoke.

*seeking out*—someone asked Feng Hsueh, "Why does someone who does not understand not doubt?" Hsueh said, "When the sacred tortoise crawls overland how can it avoid leaving tracks in the mud?"

*not understanding*—a monk asked Hsuan Sha, "The student has just entered the monastery; please show me an entry road." Hsuan Sha said, "Do you hear the sound of the valley stream?" "Yes," answered the monk. Sha said, "Enter from there."

*lifting up*—someone asked an old adept, "'Wordly knowledge and brilliant intellect should not be brought out at all'—return the words to me." The adept immediately hit him.

*posing a question*—someone asked Yun Men, "What about when you don't see any boundaries when looking directly?" Yun Men said, "Reflect."

*intentional question*—someone asked Shou Shan, "All sentient beings have the Buddha nature—why don't they know it?" Shou Shan said, "They know."

*using things/events*—someone asked Feng Hsueh, "There is a pearl in the sea; how can I get it?" "When Wang Hsiang arrives, the light shines; where Li Lou goes, the waves

flood the skies." (Wang Hsiang and Li Lou were legendary men of supernormal eyesight: the former once found a lost pearl for the Yellow Emperor of high antiquity.)

*real question*—someone asked San Sheng, "I only see that you are a monk; what are the Buddha and the Teachings?" San Sheng said, "This is Buddha, this is the Teaching; do you know it?"

*fabricated question*—someone asked Ching Shan, "This here is the one in the shrine—what is the Buddha?" Ching Shan said, "This is the one in the shrine."

*making sure*—someone asked one of the ancestral teachers, "All things fundamentally are existent—what is nonexistent?" The Patriarch said, "Your question is quite clear; why bother to ask further of me?"

*eliciting*—someone asked Mu Chou, "What did the ancestral teacher Bodhidharma come from India to China for?" Mu Chou said, "You tell me what it's for." The monk did not reply, so Mu Chou hit him.

*clarifying* (the example given is the main case of *The Blue Cliff Record* 65)

*silent question*—an outsider came to the Buddha and stood there silently in his presence. The Buddha said, "So much." The outsider said, "World Honored One, your great mercy and compassion have allowed me to enter."

# Select Glossary of Names and Terms

*alayavijnana*—The so-called storehouse or repository consciousness, wherein accumulate influences of deed and habit, producing impressions which are customarily mistaken for qualities of the objective world; when all egoism and self-affirming habits of attachment are eliminated, this all embracing consciousness is 'transformed' into the so-called great perfect mirror knowledge.

*Avalokitesvara*—The bodhisattva representing compassion and all-sided skill in liberative technique, traditionally said to be the guardian of the compassion and love of Amitabha, Buddha of Infinite Light and Life. Known also as the Sound Seer from the image of the lord who watches the sounds of the world to rescue beings in distress; it is said in the Surangama scripture that Avalokitesvara attained enlightenment through audition by turning back to look into the source of hearing; this meditative exercise is well known and often applied in Ch'an practice.

*Bodhidharma*—The First Patriarch of Ch'an in China, said to have originally been of a noble Brahmin family from south India, later became the successor of Prajnatarā, Twenty-seventh Patriarch of Buddhism, and spent fifty years in China after having already taught in India for sixty odd years.

*bodhisattva*—An enlightened being or a warrior for enlightenment, one who forgoes the repose of extinction to struggle for the enlightenment of all conscious beings, voluntarily accepting the passions and confusions of the mundane life in order to communicate with the beings involved there so as to be able to fulfill his commitment to liberate them.

*Buddha*—A completely enlightened one, also called one who has come to realize thusness, World Honored One, king of Dharma, teacher of humans and gods, lord.



*Buddha Dharma*—The teaching of the enlightened ones, the way to enlightenment; also used to refer to truth or reality.

*consciousnesses*—Refers to the fields and functions of consciousnesses associated with senses, intellection, judgment, and formation of habit, etc. Emotional consciousness is states of mind, emotion, and intellection, which are primarily influenced by emotions ('like' 'dislike' etc., which inevitably return to the attempt to preserve the idea or feeling of self) and thus screened by such involvements from clear perception of reality or truth.

*demon*—Representation of deluding or confusing forces, objects of attachment or aversion, or malevolent forces robbing people of clarity, will, and the life of wisdom.

*diamond king*—The awakened mind; diamond is a symbol of penetrating wisdom, indestructible as a diamond.

*dragon*—Someone who is enlightened or has reached an advanced spiritual degree; though 'dragons' live physically in the 'animal' world, their profound state of meditation allows them to transcend this condition and enjoy the bliss of heavenly states or complete calm. Great Ch'an adepts and students are often referred to as 'dragons and elephants'—one who looks adept at first but turns out otherwise is said to have a 'dragon's head but a snake's tail.'

*Gaptooth*—'He with gapped rotting teeth' is Bodhidharma (qv), also known as the Blue-Eyed Barbarian or the Red-Bearded Barbarian, the Pierced-Ear Traveller, the First Patriarch, the Ancestral Teacher; he is also referred to by place names such as Shao Lin, Few Houses (name of mountain where Shao Lin temple was), and Bear's Ear Mountain (where he is entombed).

*Gautama*—A Buddha, inspirator of Buddhism's historical forms and perhaps the greatest of known teachers of the way of enlightenment; also called Yellow Face and Old Shakyamuni.

*jewel sword*—Symbol of adamant wisdom, transcendental knowing, which is able to cut through all confusion and delusion.

*intimacy*—Intimate communion with reality, personal experience of the Way.

*It*—The absolute (used both so as to contain the relative absolute and the absolute relative); reality, or what is. Often *It* is not specified in Chinese but needed in English to fit the sense. *This* (one, side) and *That* (one, side) are sometimes used to refer specifically to the imminent and transcendent aspects of *It*. *He* is also used similarly, like the Arabic *Hu*, a name for reality; in Ch'an usage, this can be read as personal ('there is nothing that is not the self of a saint') or impersonal ('a saint has no self').

*kashaya*—An upper vestment worn by monks when meditating or performing symbolic services.

*Maitreya*—The Loving One, the future Buddha, said to be presently living in the heaven of satisfaction, awaiting the time when he will be born on earth for the welfare of all beings. Mahasattva Fu (cf. case 67) and Pu Tai (Hotei) were both considered to be manifestations of Maitreya.

*mahasattva*—An enlightened bodhisattva, a great hero or great knight (the literal meaning of mahasattva) who is fully qualified for complete buddhahood, but travels endlessly in the rounds of life to liberate beings rather than abiding as the pole of a field of enlightenment. All the trans-historical bodhisattvas mentioned in the Blue Cliff Record are mahasattvas.

*Mahasthamaprapta*—The bodhisattva representing empowerment, depicted as the guardian of the knowledge of Amitabha Buddha.

*Manjusri*—The bodhisattva representing wisdom and knowledge, depicted as riding on a golden lion (symbol of the body of reality) and being the teacher of the seven Buddhas of antiquity. Manjusri's image is the conventional main icon of Ch'an meditation halls.

*nirvana*—Extinction of suffering, known as Peace, Liberation, Bliss, the Other Shore, the Refuge, the Uncompounded, etc. In early Buddhism *nirvana* was known as the correct, or absolute state, and is the essence of sainthood.

*outsider*—This is used by Buddhists to refer to non-Buddhists, but in Ch'an lingo anyone who seeks or grasps anything is

called an outsider, estranged from inherent enlightened nature.

*Patriarch*—Ancestor; refers to living examples of enlightenment; it can refer to the leaders or founders of branches of Buddhism, and in Ch'an is also used as a term of respect for adepts of earlier generations as well as the founders of the streams.

*patchrobe*—An example and symbol of poverty, the clothes of Buddhist ascetics were made of patched rags. This expression is also used in Sufism, with the same basic sense.

*pillar and lamp*—Being present in the teaching halls, the pillar and lamp are often mentioned as examples and thus representative of the objective world.

*reed shade*—A bundle of reeds used to shade sun off water so as to be able to see beyond the surface into the depths—a simile for tactics of a Teaching Master to draw out or see into a student.

*samadhi*—One-pointed focus of mind; concentration or absorption; sometimes extended in Ch'an usage to refer to any state of mind, any activity, even phenomena.

*Samantabhadra*—Bodhisattva representing goodness and wisdom in all actions, the ultimate principle of union of knowledge and myriad deeds for the enlightenment of all beings; Samantabhadra is depicted as riding on an elephant. The vow of Samantabhadra closes the *Gandhavyuha*, a major scripture contained in the grand *Avatamsaka* (Hua Yen) scripture; it bespeaks the ultimate aspirations of those who conceive the will for universal enlightenment.

*South*—A code word for Ch'an study ('going South') or enlightened knowledge itself; the journey of Sudhana for enlightenment (which is the story of the *Gandhavyuha*) was to the South and Ch'an flourished most in southern China during its golden age in the T'ang dynasty—hence the association came to be a fixed term.

*Tathagata*—An epithet of Buddhas, meaning one who has come to realize thusness.

*triple world*—Three worlds; refers to the realms of desire, form, and formlessness or immateriality.

*turning word*—Word or expression occasioning or representing the transformation from delusion to enlightenment, especially a term or phrase which contains both ordinary and spiritual or transcendental meanings, both provisional and real, or both negative and positive modes.

*triple vehicle*—Three vehicles; refers to the careers of discipleship (following the Dharma to realize personal emptiness and sainthood), self-enlightenment (solitary liberation through understanding of the process of conditioning), and bodhisattvahood (realization of both personal and phenomenal emptiness and the conception of great compassion and commitment to the enlightenment of all beings). These three vehicles lead into the so-called unique vehicle, which is the way of complete Buddhahood.

*Ts'ao Ch'i*—A river and river valley in south China, where the famous Sixth Patriarch of Ch'an taught; hence it comes to be a codeword not only for that Patriarch, Hui Neng, but for all the streams of Ch'an (and hence Ch'an itself, after the ninth century) which were descended from Hui Neng's enlightened disciples.

*whisk*—Used for nonviolent insect dispersal, its use was a prerogative of abbots, so it came to be another symbol (and in fact was physically handed down as such) of the succession of a Ch'an lineage; it is commonly used, however, like the pillar and the lamp, as a representative symbol of This, objective reality.

*Vairocana*—The great Sun Buddha, the Illuminator, the so-called Adibuddha or primordial awakening, symbolizing the body of reality. As a meditation (*dhyani*) Buddha in esoteric Buddhism, Vairocana is associated with mind and may be said to represent the basic awakened intelligence or the fundamental luminous quality of awareness. The cosmos itself also may be said to be an attribute of Vairocana.

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